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Wayne Porter Gregory

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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**Making the secular sacred: An analysis of linguistic devices used
to give religious perspective to ordinary events**

Gregory, Wayne Porter, Ph.D.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1992

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Ann Arbor, MI 48106

**MAKING THE SECULAR SACRED:
AN ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC DEVICES USED
TO GIVE RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE TO ORDINARY EVENTS**

A Dissertation

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

in

The Interdepartmental Program in Linguistics

**by
Wayne Porter Gregory
B.A., Baylor University. 1980
M.A., in Linguistics, Louisiana State University, 1988
May 1992**

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Abstract

It has been suggested that human beings do not possess social reality so much as they actively and cooperatively construct it by means of language in interaction with others. The manipulation of symbols, the creation of inferences, the posturing of one's personal identity all work together to enable participants (both speakers and hearers) in a given speech event to create social reality and reaffirm and maintain their social relationships.

In religious speech communities, like the one investigated in this study, participants seek to create a different kind of social reality - one that encompasses all of the individual and corporate experiences of the group and interprets and reconstructs those experiences, transforming their secular nature into something of sacred significance. The speech community I investigated is radically committed to a worldview which understands the invisible, spiritual, sacred world as the fundamental reality within which everything else must be understood and interpreted. Everyday events only have meaning as they can be fitted into the larger schema of sacred reality. In this speech community, speakers work cooperatively and interactively together via a variety of linguistic devices to give sacred perspective to secular events and, in so doing, additionally create new spiritual experiences that augment their shared group knowledge and serve to strengthen their social harmony.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1.0 Introduction

It has been suggested that human beings do not possess social reality so much as they actively and cooperatively construct it by means of language in interaction with others. The manipulation of symbols, the creation of inferences, the posturing of one's personal identity all work together to enable participants (both speakers and hearers) in a given speech event to create social reality and reaffirm and maintain their social relationships.

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This study will examine several typical speech events involving a group of members of the larger community and evaluate the linguistic means by which they attempt to make the secular sacred.

1.1 The Role of Speech in Human Behavior

1.1.1 The Boasians and the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

The role of speech in human behavior has long been a recognized field of inquiry and has fascinated practitioners from a variety of disciplines. Linguistics has emerged as perhaps the scientific discipline that most comprehensively addresses the issue of language, although it could be argued that this science has gained explanatory strength from continually pervasive invasions from neighboring social sciences such as sociology, psychology and anthropology. It is the latter, in fact, which provided the initial incubation for the linguistic discipline, and which from its own beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emphasized the importance of understanding language in order to understand human beings and their cultural patterns and social organizations. Beginning with Boas (1911), anthropologists began to look at language within the larger methodological framework of ethnography and attempted to describe particular languages as an important part of the cultural patterns of the particular society in question. The Descriptivists, as they came to be called, believed that language was an unconscious pattern in the individual but was a key to deciphering the larger, interconnected patterns of the society.

The Boasian school of linguistics ultimately diverged in two directions both of which had their roots in descriptivism, but which often sharply disagreed. On the one hand, Leonard Bloomfield (1933), influenced heavily by behaviorist psychology, focused not on the relationship between language and culture, but the attitudinal

responses to linguistic expression. On the other hand, Sapir emphasized the crucial connection between language and culture, attributing to language a predispositional relationship to one's culture and worldview, an idea greatly expanded and made more deterministic by his student, Benjamin Whorf (Carroll, 1956), and institutionalized as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Sapir explains:

Language is a guide to "social reality." Though language is not ordinarily thought of as of essential interest to the students of social science, it powerfully conditions all our thinking about social problems and processes. Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality.

(Mandelbaum, 1949:162)

This linguistic theory also elucidates Sapir's theory of culture, which propounds that culture does not determine the individual's behavior so much as it is built up from the behavior of the individuals in it. Sapir proposes that an individual's environment provides an experience within which individuals react to a set of social factors and, thus, culture is "...being reanimated or creatively affirmed from day to day by particular acts of a communicative nature which obtain among individuals participating in it" (104). Sapir's interests and contributions concerning language, culture and the personality of the individual were, in many ways, precursors to later developments that focused even more closely on language and its social significance.

1.1.2 The Ethnography of Speaking

The Descriptivist school of linguistics, especially Bloomfield's behavioristic approach, continued to dominate and define the field until the early 1960's when Noam

Chomsky revolutionized the direction of linguistic theory. Chomsky rejected the idea that language behavior was of methodological importance, but proposed instead that linguists study language through “idealized abstractions” (Canale and Swain, 1980). For Chomsky, the focus of linguistic description was quite different from that of his predecessors:

“[The] serious discipline [of linguistics is] concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.” (Chomsky, 1965:3)

It was his idea that the speech of native speakers was not the kind of data linguists should be concerned with because such data contained “errors” in performance and were, thus, unreliable. His generative grammar was intended to highlight the rules of grammar internalized in the speaker's head that would make it possible for him or her to understand linguistic relations and produce speech. Chomsky noted that “if we hope to understand human language and the psychological capacities on which it rests, we must first ask what it is, not how or for what purpose it is used” (62). It was Chomsky who initially made the distinction between competence, which he defined in terms of the linguistic system internalized in the speaker, and performance, which he described as primarily psychological aspects of language processing and production.

These ideas were challenged by many who disagreed with Chomsky's attempt to severely limit the scope of investigation in linguistics. One of the chief critics of the Chomskian model was Dell Hymes, who argued for a different theory of language that would account for the importance of the speaker as a person in a social world (Hymes, 1972). Whereas Chomsky had argued for a grammatical competence based on his concept of an ideal speaker-listener, Hymes recognized that a comprehensive theory of

language would have to account for a speaker-listener in a heterogeneous community and would have to account for important sociocultural features. Hymes refused to accept the idea that language was a system consisting only of rules for linking referential meaning with sounds." Such a model implies naming to be the sole use of speech, as if languages were never organized to lament, rejoice, beseech, admonish, aphorize, inveigh... for the many varied forms of persuasion, direction, expression and symbolic play. A model of language must design it with a face toward communicative conduct and social life." (1972:278) Hymes argued instead for a more comprehensive concept he called "communicative competence" which linked linguistic theory to a more general idea of culture and communicative behavior. For Hymes, the linguistic competence we acquire from birth includes more than simply a knowledge of grammatical structure and the accompanying rules for generation and transformation of output. Hymes (1972:281) proposed a competence composed of four types:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is *formally* possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails.

Thus, communicative competence is not simply a knowledge of linguistic rules or grammatical systems, but the interaction of grammatical, psycholinguistic and sociocultural systems of competence. Gumperz (1972:205) notes that 'whereas linguistic competence covers the speaker's ability to produce grammatically correct

sentences, communicative competence describes his ability to select, from the totality of grammatically correct expressions available to him, forms which appropriately reflect the social norms governing behavior in specific encounters.” Therefore, speakers acquire not only the ability to accurately produce the linguistic code, but also know what is socially and culturally appropriate to say in any given situation. Since a speaker is able to use his or her language appropriately because of a set of cultural knowledge and skills that are brought to bear upon any given utterance in any given event, it is, therefore, necessary to understand knowledge of the cultural meaning in which linguistic activity is embedded, in order to interpret linguistic behavior.

From this understanding, Hymes proposed (1962; 1964a; 1964b, 1967) that ethnography of speaking, a research method for discovering and describing all the relevant factors in any given communicative event , was the best approach to the study of speaking in the social life of a group. This approach recognizes that social structures are not determined by the society itself, but are “largely created in performance by the strategic and goal directed manipulation of resources for speaking” (Bauman & Sherzer, 1974:8). Thus, it is crucial to understand the full range of features in operation in a speaking event, in order to understand the structure and patterns of the speech community. Ethnography of speaking looks at the situated use of language and “consists of discovery *from within* the society by social scientists of the existence of common sense knowledge of social structures ”(Garfinkel, 1967:76-7; emphasis in the original). Bauman (1983a) explains that ethnographers of speaking focus on language as part of a cultural system and “seek to elucidate the interrelationships among language, culture, and society at their source, in the culturally patterned language as an element and instrument of social life” (1983a:5). Other approaches to this kind of description have resulted in attempts to describe the different functions of language,

with a view toward the categorizations of such functions (Jakobson, 1960; Halliday, 1973; Robinson, 1972).

Others have contributed to the development of the conceptual and methodological framework (cf: Ervin-Tripp, 1969; ; Sherzer and Darnell, 1972; Slobin, 1967), and several studies have been undertaken utilizing this approach and method (Gumperz and Hymes, 1972; Bauman and Sherzer, 1974; Bauman, 1983b; Keenan 1974; Irvine 1974; Sacks 1974; Brukman 1975 Schegloff 1968). This study will employ an ethnography of speaking approach to examine several speech events within a specific religious speech community and make claims about how that community, via language, interprets secular experience in the light of a sacred reality. Furthermore, the general concept of face and the goal of face maintenance in social interactions will be accessed in the analysis of Bible Study speech events in Chapter 4.

Ethnography of speaking as a methodological paradigm is not only interdisciplinary in the sense that it draws from concepts and theories in a variety of fields, but is also interdisciplinary in its own influence on and potential contributions to those same fields. For anthropologists, ethnography of speaking offers keen insights into the relationship of language to the larger cultural patterns and organization of a society. For sociologists, the approach can greatly inform one's understanding of social relationships and provide keys to understanding the processes and mechanisms by which people interpret experience and create reality. For the psychologist, an ethnographic approach to describing language behavior can supplement an understanding of linguistic processing and production by providing insight into the social input to that processing and production. Finally, for applied linguists, ethnography of speaking offers great awareness into what it is learners acquire when they acquire a language and makes it possible to formulate hypotheses and approaches

to second language acquisition in which the interacting components of communicative competence, specifically the social and cultural aspects, figure prominently (Canale & Swain, 1980).

1.1.3 The Influence of Ethnomethodology

In addition to the influence of anthropology, ethnography of speaking has also gained by contributions from sociology, specifically the branch called ethnomethodology, which is concerned with the ways in which people interpret and interact with the world around them. Ethnomethodology proposes a phenomenological view of the world in which the world is something that people constantly create for themselves, chiefly through language. Therefore, as Goffman (1964;1971) argues, the components and rules of a social context must be included in any description of linguistic behavior. Among those components is the underlying motivation of speakers interacting in social encounters to maintain “face” (Goffman, 1967). Goffman proposes that in every social interaction, a person acts out a “line”, which is “a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants.” (1967: 5) Goffman further argues that in acting out this line in a social interaction a person claims for himself or herself a “positive social value” called face. When one’s line is perceived as out of sync with the expectations of the participants, that person is considered “out of face” or “in the wrong face” and must either accept the accompanying humiliation or make adjustments to alleviate the predicament. Other sociologists (cf. Cicourel ,1964; Garfinkel, 1964, and Sacks, 1972) have also contributed significantly to the general framework of ethnography of speaking with their emphasis on speakers’ work to make sense of their reality in social interactions.

1.1.4 Sociolinguistics

The social nature of the ethnography of speaking approach to linguistic analysis places it firmly within a larger and growing subdiscipline called sociolinguistics. The seminal work in the area of sociolinguistic research (cf. Frake, 1964; Hymes, 1962; Gumperz & Hymes, 1964 ;1972) which helped connect linguistic inquiry generally with understanding of society and culture, certainly also gave impetus for the development of the ethnography of speaking approach. Hymes describes the goal of sociolinguistic research:

The goal of sociolinguistic description can be put in terms of the disciplines whose interests converge in sociolinguistics. Whatever his questions about language, it is clear to a linguist that there is an enterprise, description of languages, which is central and known. Whatever his questions about society and culture, it is clear to a sociologist or an anthropologist that there is a form of inquiry (survey or ethnography) on which the answers depend. In both cases, one understands what it means to describe a language, the social relations, or culture of a community. We need to be able to say the same thing about the sociolinguistic systems of a community. (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972:52)

However, not all sociolinguists are concerned with an ethnographic approach. Indeed, some of the early leaders of the field (Bailey, 1976; Labov, 1963;1966; Trudgill, 1974) focused on description of phonological and syntactic features that helped define membership in specific social groups, rather than considering the rather large range of features represented in Hymes' (1974) SPEAKING acronym.

1.1.5 Notions of Speech Community and Speech Event

Nonetheless, all linguistic inquiry in the field of sociolinguistics hinges on several key concepts, the first of which is the notion of speech community, which proposes that the object of description is primarily social rather than linguistic . While Labov (1972)

considers speech communities in terms of shared attitudes and values toward linguistic features, Hymes (1972) defines speech community as “a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of a least one linguistic variety.” (1972: 54) Basically, a speech community must have some kind of cohesiveness and some notion that it is a community and set apart, along some set of features, from other communities or groups. This distinction is captured by Gumperz (1971:114) when he defines a speech community as “any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage.” For Hymes (1974) the notion of speech community is somewhat elusive due to distinctions between membership and participation in a group:

To participate in a speech community is not quite the same as to be a member of it. Here we encounter the limitation of any conception of speech community in terms of knowledge alone even knowledge of patterns of speaking as well as of grammar, and of course, of any definition in terms of interaction alone. Just the matter of accent may erect a barrier between participation and membership in one case, although be ignored in another. Obviously membership in a community depends upon criteria which in any given case may not even saliently involve language and speaking, as when birthright is considered indelible. (1974:50 - 51)

Thus, it has been suggested that the speech community concept is a relative one (Brown & Levinson, 1979; Wardhaugh, 1986) and that the determination of whether a community is, in fact, organized according to patterns of language use or according to non-linguistic criteria, will be decided by the outcome of ethnographic study (Saville-Troike, 1989:18). Bolinger (1975:333) seems to agree when he notes that the notion of speech community must be a flexible one because “there is no limit to the ways in which human beings league themselves together for self-identification, security, gain, amusement, worship, or any of the other purposes that are held in

common; consequently there is no limit to the number and variety of speech communities that are to be found in a society.”

Despite attempts by many to define this concept (e.g., Hudson, 1980; Bloomfield, 1933; Hockett, 1958; Sherzer, 1975; Milroy, 1987) it seems productive to follow the direction of Saville-Troike (1989) and allow the results of ethnographic study to contribute to the delineation of a community, rather than determining a priori its constraints and boundaries.

In addition to the notion of speech community, an ethnographic approach to sociolinguistic research depends to a great extent upon the concept of speech event. Hymes (1972:56) defines a speech event as “activities, or aspects of activities, that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech.” Thus, in any given community a number of speech events are conceivable: prayers, jokes, eulogies, stories, sermons, political speeches and other forms of oratory, as well as face-to-face interaction via conversation. It is further conceivable that in any given social interaction, a number of different speech events can occur, e.g a joke told during the course of conversation or a story embedded in a larger oratory, such as a political speech or religious sermon. In this study, I will consider a particular speech community that is defined primarily by its shared religious values rather than common linguistic features and I will explore their linguistic behavior through a variety of speech events.

1.2 The Situated Use of Language

1.2.1 Discourse Analysis

The focus on speech events as examples of the situated use of language has prompted the development of the field of discourse analysis, which finds a comfortable

place in sociolinguistics as well as pragmatics and semantics, psycholinguistics and computational linguistics. Levinson (1983:286) defines discourse analysis as follows:

Discourse analysis (or DA) employs both the methodology and the kinds of theoretical principles and primitive concepts (e.g. *rule, well-formed formula*) typical of linguistics. It is essentially a series of attempts to extend the techniques so successful in linguistics beyond the unit of the sentence. (1983:286)

Discourse analysis looks not only at spoken, but written texts as well and considers not only the regularities of linguistic form within the discourse, but principles of interpretation with which readers and hearers make sense of what they receive (Brown & Yule, 1983). Furthermore, discourse has been defined as essentially a string of sentences and, in fact, discourse analysis has often been most concerned with strings of sentences of a hypothetical nature as opposed to sequences of actual talk, and has depended heavily on consideration of speech acts (Searle, 1969) in analysis.

On the other hand, conversation analysis, while sharing some common theoretical and methodological ground with discourse analysis, has developed as an approach that has traditionally considered informal forms of interaction between real speakers. Conversation analysis was greatly influenced by the ethnomethodological approach which reacts against the imposition of categories on data and argues instead for an approach in which a “set of techniques that the members of a society themselves utilize to interpret and act within their own social worlds.” (Levinson, 1983:295). Conversation has been described (Laver & Hutcheson, 1972:11) as the “total system of communication employed by participants in face-to-face interaction” or, as Goffman has stated:

as the talk occurring when a small number of participants come together and settle into what they perceive to be a few moments cut off from (or carried on to the side of) instrumental tasks; a period of idling felt to be an end in itself, during which

everyone is accorded the right to talk as well as to listen and without reference to a fixed schedule; everyone is accorded the status of someone whose overall evaluation of the subject matter at hand - whose editorial comments, as it were - is to be encouraged and treated with respect. (Goffman, 1976:264)

And, although the defining criterion of conversation is talk, paralinguistic features such as stress and intonation (Lyons ,1972), different kinds of non-verbal behavior (Birdwhistell, 1970), and the orientation of gaze in interaction (Argyle & Cook, 1976; Kendon, 1967) are salient for understanding the overall interactive event.

1.2.2 Pragmatics: Speech Acts and Gricean Maxims

In addition to the influence of ethnomethodology, the burgeoning field of pragmatics has also contributed greatly to an understanding of conversation. Levinson (1983:33) notes that pragmatics juxtaposes actual language usage with “the highly idealized data on which much current theorizing is based.” For this reason, while it has grown out of and extensively drawn upon the more traditional core linguistic subdiscipline of semantics, pragmatics finds a more comfortable place within the realm of sociolinguistics and, specifically, conversation analysis.

One of the major contributions of semantics/pragmatics to the area of conversation analysis is its consideration of speech act theory and the Gricean theory of conversational maxims and implicature. Austin, in a series of lectures last given in 1955, and later published (1962; see also Austin 1970a,1970b, & 1971), set out to propose that users of language not only say things with words, but do things as well. Austin noted that sentences such as the following don’t actually have truth value and, as such, aren’t describing states of affairs but are, in fact, doing something:

- (1) I apologize.
- I object.
- I promise.

I now pronounce you man and wife.

I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

I give you my word.

Austin contrasted these kinds of sentences, which he called performatives, with other kinds of sentences (such as statements or questions) which are “connected in some way with events or happenings in a possible world (Wardhaugh, 1986:275) and which are propositions that can be assigned the values true or false. This latter kind of sentence he termed constative. Austin noted that although performatives don’t have truth value, it is conceivable that they can somehow not work or be infelicitous. In order to avoid such infelicity, certain felicity conditions must obtain for any given performative to succeed. First of all, for any given performative there must be a prescribed procedure that specifies who says what in order for the performative to be appropriate. Secondly, this procedure must be carried out properly and to completion by all parties involved and, thirdly, the required thoughts, feelings and intentions must be in operation among all those participating. So, for example, for the sentence “I now pronounce you man and wife” to be successful, it must be said in a legal marriage ceremony to a bride and groom by a legally recognized officer of the court or ordained minister.

Austin further argued that performatives “do things” by virtue of having a certain “force”:

Besides the question that has been very much studied in the past as to what a certain utterance *means*, there is a further question distinct from this as to what was the *force*, as we call it, of the utterance. We may be quite clear what “Shut the door” means, but not yet at all clear on the further point as to whether as uttered at a certain time it was an order, an entreaty or whatnot. What we need besides the old doctrine about meanings is a new doctrine about all the possible forces of utterances... (Austin, 1970a :251; italics his)

Austin further elaborated this “doctrine about all the possible forces” with his claim that when one does something with words, three kinds of acts are performed concurrently. The locutionary act is the simple utterance of a sentence with specific reference and sense, whereas the illocutionary act has to do with the intentions of the speaker to accomplish something specific. It can be argued that a variety of locutionary acts can all be used to accomplish the same intention and, thus, have the same illocutionary force. Finally, there are perlocutionary acts, which capture the notion that utterances bring about effects of various types on the audience. Austin’s theory ended up attempting to account for more than a particular, isolated set of sentence-types and took the approach that there was, in fact, such a particular class (explicit performatives) that included sentences as exemplified above, but there was also another type (implicit performatives) that conceivably could include everything else.

Building on the theory of Austin, John Searle (1969:1979) looked at how speakers perceive a particular utterance to have a particular force, or what he calls the “uptake” of an utterance. He further specified Austin’s felicity conditions (propositional content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions and essential condition), which he said were necessary to accurately discern the illocutionary force of an utterance. The propositional content conditions place certain restrictions on the content of the proposition and preparatory conditions specify that all participants in the speech act want the act done. Thirdly, the sincerity condition obligates the speaker to actually intend to perform the act and, finally, the essential condition notes that actually uttering the words counts as performance of the action. To summarize, “in contrast to Austin, who focused his attention on how speakers realize their intentions in speaking, Searle focuses on how listeners respond to utterances, that is, how one person tries to figure out how another is using a particular utterance” (Wardhaugh 1986:279).

On the heels of Austin and Searle, Grice further considered how hearers understand and interpret illocutionary force, by postulating that participants in conversation have some kind of prior agreement that induces them to be cooperative in their interaction. This cooperative principle (Grice, 1975:45) demands that participants make their “conversational contributions such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.” This cooperative principle for conversational interaction is undergirded by a set of four conversational maxims that Grice expresses as follows:

The maxim of Quality

try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

- (i) do not say what you believe to be false
- (ii) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

The maxim of Quantity

- (i) make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange
- (ii) do not make your contribution more informative than is required

The maxim of Relevance

- (i) make your contributions relevant

The maxim of Manner

- (i) avoid obscurity
- (ii) avoid ambiguity
- (iii) be brief
- (iv) be orderly

(Levinson, 1983:101 - 102).

Grice argues that normally we operate under the assumption that these maxims and this cooperative principle are being adhered to. However, there are indications that, in fact, conversation does not always proceed according to these principles, the result of which is an utterance that appears to be uncooperative. However, because our assumptions are strong concerning the pervasive influence of the conversational maxims and the preference for cooperativeness, certain inferences, which Grice calls conversational implicatures, arise which allow hearers to make sense of seemingly uncooperative utterances in a way that allows for adherence to the cooperative principle

after all. Because of his understanding that conversation operates under a cooperative principle, that its participants are subject to certain conversational maxims, and that the process of implicature allows them to make sense of apparently uncooperative utterances, Grice's contributions have helped emphasize the essential concept that conversation is a cooperative activity.

1.2.3 Politeness Strategies

There have been a number of attempts to revise Grice's theory (Horn, 1984; Sperber & Wilson, 1986; Leech, 1983). One of the most elaborate is the consideration by Brown and Levinson (1987) of politeness strategies as a model for explaining how speakers can adhere to the cooperative principles of conversational interaction and satisfactorily perform and interpret communicative intent. While drawing upon the Gricean system, this analytic framework seeks to transform our understanding of the interactive event and the communicative constraints therein. Lakoff (1975:74) notes that regarding the importance of politeness it "seems to be true...that when the crunch comes, the rules of politeness will supersede the rules of conversation: better to be unclear than rude." Drawing from Goffman (1955), the politeness framework argues that conversation is additionally cooperative in the sense that each participant in it has some notion of face and the work of presenting and protecting the face of herself or himself and the others. Brown and Levinson write:

Central to our model is a highly abstract notion of "face" which consists of two specific kinds of desires ('face-wants') attributed by interactants to one another: the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions (negative face), and the desire (in some respects) to be approved of (positive face). This is the bare bones of a notion of face which (we argue) is universal, but which in any particular society we would expect to be the subject of much cultural elaboration.
(1987:13)

Brown and Levinson further argue that politeness features (notably indirect speech) come into play when a speaker perceives that the performance of a particular act could threaten face, either his or that of his co-conversationalist. Examples of threats to the hearer's negative face may include orders, requests, suggestions, advice, reminders, threats, warnings, dares, offers, promises, compliments, and expressions of strong negative emotions toward hearer (66). Examples of threats to hearer's positive face can include expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations, insults, contradictions or disagreements, challenges, mention of taboo topics, raising divisive topics, interrupting, and use of status-marked terms (66 - 67). Conversely, Brown and Levinson offer examples of threats to the speaker's negative face, such as expressing thanks, acceptance of hearer's thanks, excuses, acceptance of offers, and unwilling promises and offers. Finally, there are potential threats to speaker's positive face, such as apologies, acceptance of compliments, self-humiliation, confessions and admissions of responsibility, and emotion leaking, i.e., non-control of laughter or tears (68).

Generally, since face-threatening acts should be performed with a minimum loss of face, speakers will use a variety of politeness strategies to minimize that threat. Brown and Levinson argue that there are three sociological factors that determine the level of politeness a speaker may use. These three levels they call the ranking of imposition (R) involved in doing the face-threatening act, the relative power (P) of the hearer over the speaker, and the social distance (D) between the speaker and hearer. These factors interact to govern the choices speakers make in choosing strategies to reduce the potential threat to face in any given interaction.

As a speaker interacts he or she makes assessments of the potential threat to face that his or her utterance may effect as well as making assessments of the interaction of

P, D and R. Based on those assessments, speakers choose strategies that fit their overall communicative intent, a balance between preserving face and being maximally efficient with their contribution. The first of four “super-strategies for doing FTA’s” is described by Brown and Levinson (1987:94) as “the bald-on-record strategy”, chosen “whenever S wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency *more than* he wants to satisfy H’s face” (95; italics theirs). The use of positive politeness strategies are attempts to minimize the threat to the hearer’s positive face, i.e that his wants should be seen as desirable. As Brown and Levinson note, these strategies do not appear to be anything more than normal conversation between close friends:

the linguistic realizations of positive politeness are in many respects simply representative of the normal linguistic behavior between intimates, where interest and approval of each other’s personality, presuppositions indicating shared wants and shared knowledge, implicit claims to reciprocity of obligations or to reflexivity of wants, etc. are routinely exchanged (1987:101).

Brown and Levinson propose that there are three categories of positive politeness strategies, as illustrated below:

1. Claim Common Ground
 - Strategy 1: Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods)
 - Strategy 2: Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)
 - Strategy 3: Intensify interest to H
 - Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers
 - Strategy 5: Seek agreement
 - Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement
 - Strategy 7: Presuppose/raise/assert common ground
 - Strategy 8: Joke
2. Convey that S and H are cooperators
 - Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose S’s knowledge of and concern for H’s wants
 - Strategy 10: Offer promise
 - Strategy 11: Be optimistic
 - Strategy 12: Include both S and H in the activity
 - Strategy 13: Give (or ask for) reasons
 - Strategy 14: Assume or assert reciprocity

3. Fulfil H's want (for some X)

Strategy 15: Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)
(1987:103 - 129).

Negative politeness strategies are employed in an attempt to minimize threat to the negative face of the speaker's co-conversationalist, i.e. his want for a sense of autonomy and unhindered action. These strategies are ones that are most familiar to the laymen when thinking of "politeness" and are the ones that "fill the etiquette books" (130). Brown and Levinson argue that these strategies are the most elaborate and conventionalized and group them into five major categories:

1. Be direct
Strategy 1: Be conventionally indirect
 2. Don't presume/assume
Strategy 2: Question, hedge
 3. Don't coerce H (where x involves H doing A)
Strategy 3: Be pessimistic
Strategy 4: Minimize the imposition Rx
Strategy 5: Give deference
 4. Communicate S's want to not impinge on H
Strategy 6: Apologize
Strategy 7: Impersonalize S and H: avoid the pronouns "I" and "you"
Strategy 8: State the FTA as a general rule
Strategy 9: Nominalize
 5. Redress other wants of H's, derivative from negative face
Strategy 10: Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebted H
- (1987:129 - 211)

Finally, if speakers predict a potential FTA they can divorce themselves from any responsibility for the communicative act and leave it to the hearer to interpret it. Therefore, the strategy of going "off record" produces "contextually ambiguous indirection" (213) leaving hearers to infer the intentions of the speaker. It is noted that there is no clear understanding of how this process occurs, but more than likely there is some kind of "trigger" (probably as a result of flouting a Gricean maxim) as well as "some mode of *inference* [that] derives what is meant (intended) from what is actually said, this last providing a sufficient *clue* for the inference" (211; brackets mine; italics

theirs). Because of this contextually ambiguous indirection, there is potential for misinterpretation by the hearer of the intent of the speaker. Brown and Levinson divide off record strategies into two categories:

1. Invite conversational implicatures, via hints triggered by violation of Gricean maxims
 - Violate Relevance Maxim
 - Strategy 1: Give hints
 - Strategy 2: Give association clues
 - Strategy 3: Presuppose
 - Violate Quantity Maxim
 - Strategy 4: Understate
 - Strategy 5: Overstate
 - Strategy 6: Use tautologies
 - Violate Quality Maxim
 - Strategy 7: Use contradictions
 - Strategy 8: Be ironic
 - Strategy 9: Use metaphors
 - Strategy 10: Use rhetorical questions
2. Be vague or ambiguous
 - Violate Manner Maxim
 - Strategy 11: Be ambiguous
 - Strategy 12: Be vague
 - Strategy 13: Over-generalize
 - Strategy 14: Displace H
 - Strategy 15: Be incomplete, use ellipsis

(1987:211 - 227).

Thus, Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness strategies maintains that in conversational interaction, participants operate under an agreement not only to be cooperative in their contributions, but cooperative in their maintenance of a shared social goal to preserve the dual (positive and negative) face wants of each other. When speakers perceive that their contributions amount to potential face threatening acts, based on their assessments of the P, D and R factors in operation over the situation, they have at their disposal a variety of politeness strategies which can be used in an attempt to minimize the face threatening act.

In the analysis of data in this study, I will draw upon this general notion of politeness strategies, as well as access some of the specific strategies mentioned, in describing the interaction going on in a Bible Study event (Chapter 4). In this analysis, I will argue that the overriding social constraint in operation in this event is not specifically the preservation of individual face, but the maintenance of a group goal, consensus. In this speech event, speakers are called upon to state propositions that assert personal opinions, thus setting the stage for the creation of potential conflict, rather than the building of consensus. In order to hedge against their contributions being perceived by the hearers as consensus threatening, speakers employ a variety of distancing strategies (some of which overlap with the Brown and Levinson politeness strategies) that attempt to signal the hearer that the speaker is distancing himself or herself from responsibility for the potentially consensus threatening inferences that an utterance might trigger.

1.3 Face to Face Interaction

1.3.1 Conversation Analysis Explored

As previously noted, conversation analysis is a field of inquiry that has thus far analyzed as data the informal forms of face to face interaction between real speakers. One of the fundamental observations about conversation is that despite its spontaneous and often chaotic appearance, it seems, in fact, to be a highly organized activity that operates at many levels under the influence of some kind of unconscious set of rules or constraints that influence the choices of speakers and defines the kinds of likely interpretations and what is appropriate in a given situation (cf. Ervin-Tripp, 1972; Labov, 1972; Toulmin, 1974; Nofsinger, 1975; Pearce, 1976; Labov and Fashnel, 1977; Vucnich, 1977; Cronen & Davis, 1978; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1978; Jacobs &

Jackson, 1979; Planalp & Tracy, 1980; Shimanoff, 1980; Sigman, 1980; McLaughlin & Cody, 1982). These rules seem to be internalized in the speaker's competence, grounded as well, in particular situations of utterance, but they are not deterministic in the sense that they do not render conversationalists as passive participants. Rather, the rules seem to be operators to which conversationalists orient their behavior and, thus indicate that the participants have choices in what kind of contributions they make, within the general guidelines of the rules and, therefore, these participants are cast in very active roles as "self-aware actors" (McLaughlin 1984:15). This study will treat conversationalists in this light, as speakers and hearers actively making choices in an attempt to orient their linguistic behavior toward some socially agreed upon interactive norms.

I have already noted the possible social constraints in operation over conversational interactions that influence speakers' choices of politeness strategies to attempt the preservation of face in light of potential threats to that face. In the sections that follow, I will attempt to depict other aspects of conversation that many in the field have sought to analyze in terms of understandable conversational rules and structures.

1.3.2 Turn Taking

One of the most noticeable features of conversation is the alternation of speaker and hearer roles via a turn-taking system. In an effort to preserve a situation in which, generally speaking, one party talks at a time, the fundamental purpose of this system is to allow for the construction, ordering and distribution of turns to accomplish this. Sacks et al (1978) suggest that conversation is a kind of economic system in which turns are a commodity to be allocated one to a customer. However, a clear description of this "commodity" seems elusive to those who research the phenomenon. Basically,

attempts at definition have tried to capture the distinction between when one speaker stops and another person starts talking, although the status of back channels, silence and overlapping speech seems to complicate the issue. However, despite the various attempts at definition (Edmondson, 1981; Sacks et al, 1978; Jaffe & Feldstein, 1970; Feldstein & Welkowitz, 1978; Cherry & Lewis, 1976; Edelsky, 1981; Owen, 1981; Goffman, 1976), there seems to be agreement that “a proper account of the turn has to do several things: (1) specify the minimum number and kinds of *units* of which a turn may be composed; (2) clarify the status of the back-channel utterance; and (3) provide for the systematic assignment of silences and overlaps, all of these to be satisfied with an eye to the treatment of an event in talk as the ultimate arbiter of its function ” (McLaughlin, 1984:94 - 95; italics hers).

The most oft-cited work on the turn-taking system is that proposed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974;1978), in which the authors suggest that the system has two basic components, one of which is “turn-constructual” and deals with the “various unit-types with which a speaker may set out to construct a turn” (1978:12) and the other, “turn-allocational” , which provides for the distribution of turns between participants in conversation. Sacks et al propose a set of rules that they claim governs turn construction, the allocation of turns, as well as providing for the minimization of gap and overlap. The set of rules are as follows:

1. At initial turn-constructual unit’s initial transition-relevance place:
 - (a) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as to involve the use of a “current speaker selects next” technique, then the party so selected has rights, and is obliged, to take next turn to speak, and no others have such rights or obligations, transfer occurring at that place.
 - (b) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of a “current speaker selects next” technique, self-selection for next speakership may, but need not, be instituted, with first starter acquiring rights to a turn, transfer occurring at that place.
 - (c) If the turn-so-far is so constructed as not to involve the use of a

- “current speaker selects next” technique, then current speaker may, but need not, continue, unless another self-selects.
2. If, at initial turn-constructive unit’s initial transition-relevance place, neither 1(a) nor 1(b) has operated, and, following the provision of 1(c), current speaker has continued, then the Rule-set (a) - (c) reapplies at next transition-relevance place, and recursively at each next transition relevance place, until transfer is effected.

(Sacks et al. 1978:13)

Additionally, Sacks et al claim that conversation is governed by three organizing principles, namely that it is “locally-managed”, “party administered” and “interactionally-controlled ”(1978:42). By “locally-managed” , they mean that the turn-taking system is “directed to ‘next turn’ and ‘next transition’ on a turn-by-turn basis ” (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974:725). They further propose that this local management not only applies to turn order, but turn size as well, such that the development of each turn is under constraints imposed by the impending next turn and by its orientation to that next turn. Secondly, not only is this system locally-managed, but the variability of the system is subject to the parties involved: “the mechanism by which the system lends itself to party administration... [and]... by which turn-size and turn-order determinations are integrated... is the option-cycle provided by the ordered set of rules ” (1974:726.) Not only is this locally managed system party-administered, but is done so in such a way as to characterize it as interactively controlled. While party-administration does not need to be interactive (e.g. parties could determine turns prior to interaction, as in a debate), in conversation such administration is necessarily interactive, as demonstrated in the ordered set of rules for turn-allocation in which an option-cycle is provided. The operation of this option-cycle is contingent upon and oriented to the contributions of the other parties. Thus, “the turn as a unit is interactively determined” (1974:727).

While the Sacks et al model has contributed a great deal of insight on the structure and functioning of turn-taking systems, many questions have been raised concerning the shortcomings of this approach. First of all, they fail to adequately define their two basic units, the “turn-construction unit” and the “transition-relevance place”, and do not make a sufficient distinction between what counts as a turn or a non-turn. Furthermore, this model, among other things, fails to give a satisfactory description of the different options available with the “current speaker selects next” technique and further fails to account for the role of the hearer in turn management. Finally, it has been argued that this theory is culture specific and does not address the issue of how differences in cultural expectations of interaction could affect this model’s reliability (McLaughlin, 1984:131).

1.3.3 Coherence and Cohesion

Another area of extensive investigation in conversation analysis concerns the examination of coherence and cohesion relations and their contribution to the organization and structure of the interactive event. Attempts have been made to emphasize the importance of the Gricean notion of Relevance to understand the nature of coherence (Sabsay & Foster, 1982; Foster & Sabsay, 1982; Foster, 1982; Werth, 1981; Wilson & Sperber, 1981; Keenan & Schieffelin, 1976; Tracy, 1982; Vucnich 1977; McLaughlin, Cody, Kane & Robey, 1981; Hobbs, 1978; van Dijk, 1980; Ellis et al, 1983; Edmondson, 1981). Generally, we may conclude that “coherence differs from cohesion in that the latter seems to be used to describe the ways in which the different utterances in a sequence can appear to be about the same referents or objects ” (McLaughlin, 1984:38). Edmondson (1981) has pointed out that cohesion is usually marked by certain linguistic features, such as anaphora, that makes cohesiveness a

matter of a sentence-level or utterance-level analysis. Halliday & Hasan (1976) point out that cohesion is a sematic concept, specifically it

occurs where the INTERPRETATION of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one PRESUPPOSES the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When this happens, a relation of cohesion is set up, and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text. (1976:4; emphasis theirs)

Others (e.g., Frederiksen, 1981) have argued that cohesive devices contribute to the effectiveness of processing utterances at the psycholinguistic level.

The more global relation of coherence has been investigated in light of the notion of conversational goals and plans (Winograd, 1977; Hobbs & Evans, 1980; Cohen & Perrault, 1979; Hobbs & Agar, 1981). This line of argument necessitates that speakers and hearers have an awareness of each others' conversational goals and continually augment their own as contributions to the conversation are made. One kind of conversation goal is what Hobbs & Agar (1981) call *maintaining local coherence*, which has to do with placement of a contribution so that it fits most appropriately in the sequence of utterances. Another kind of conversational goal is that of *conversational maintenance* (McLaughlin & Cody, 1982; Arkowitz, Lichenstein, McGovern & Hines, 1975; Weimann, 1977; Dow, Glaser & Biglan, 1980; Hayes-Roth & Hays-Roth, 1979) which has to do with responsibility for conversational lapses and attempts made to avoid such lapses and sustain conversation. Others have attempted to describe the kind of planning that is required to carry out conversational goals (Hobbs & Agar, 1981; Hayes-Roth & Hayes-Roth, 1979; Cohen & Perrault, 1979), noting that plans tend to be represented in a "general tree-like structure whose nonterminal nodes are goals and subgoals . . . and whose terminal nodes are actions" to carry out the goals (Hobbs & Agar, 1981:4). Ochs (1979) makes a further contribution relative to goals and plans in

her distinction between *planned* and *unplanned discourse*. She argues that planned discourse is the kind that is prepared a priori and unplanned discourse is that which is created on the spot within the context of the interaction. Unplanned discourse is characterized by a greater dependence on the context and a greater responsibility on the hearer to make connections and interpretations, a dearth of subordinated clauses and connectives (e.g. *because*) and frequent on the spot revisions and adjustments. (1979:55 - 72)

Finally, interest in coherence/cohesion relations has led many analysts to an investigation of the notion of topic, with some taking a view that it is concerned with identifying the referents of utterances (Schank, 1977; Clark & Haviland, 1977; Strawson, 1979) and others making the argument that topic is a matter of what propositions are about (van Dijk, 1980, 1981; Foster & Sabsay, 1982; Sabsay & Foster, 1982; Reihart, 1981; Karttunen & Peters, 1979; Werth, 1981; Gazdar, 1979; McCawley, 1979; Crothers, 1978). In this study , I will not be analyzing conversation for coherence/cohesion relations nor for an account of topic markers nor rules for topic management. However, in some of the analysis I will look at discourse features (e.g. anaphora, semantic connectors, etc.) that have been claimed to be markers of cohesion between utterances, and suggest that in this data they mark attempts by speakers to be “socially cohesive”, i.e. to fit in with the overriding social goals constraining interaction in the speech event (cf. Chapter 4). This analysis is not an attempt to refute the approaches of others who have treated such features as markers of textual cohesion, but may be evidence that features in conversation are salient for a more than one reason and may, in fact, be doing double duty.

1.3.4 Preventatives and Repairs

Conversation analysis has also focused attention upon the notion of preventatives and repairs, which can be defined as attempts by speakers to prevent or repair what is perceived as negative presentations of themselves to co-conversationalists “resulting from potential or existing violations of conversational and more general societal rules.” (McLaughlin, 1984:201) One example of such attempts is consideration of prospective preventatives and repairs (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975), which seem to hinge on the social identities, or the positive and negative face of the participants.

The thematic organization of meaning by interactants usually depends upon their ability to interpret each other's actions as manifestations of particular identities. It follows that when events fail to fit themes in interaction, identities may come into focus as problematic: if the acts of another fail to appear sensible in light of his identity in the situation, perhaps he is not who he appears to be. (2)

Hewitt and Stokes propose the *disclaimer* as a device used by a speaker to signal hearers that the upcoming utterance, while under normal circumstances would result in a negative opinion of the speaker by the hearers is, in the situation of utterance, not to be interpreted in such a way. They propose five types of disclaimers (1975:4 - 5):

- (1) hedging - in which the speaker signals his or her limited commitment to the utterance and its potential outcome (e.g. I'm really not sure about this, but..);
- (2) credentialling - in which the speaker, in face of being miscast in a negative light due to the potentiality of his or her statement, offers credentials designed to let the hearer know that the speaker is not what the hearer may judge him or her to be (e.g. I'm all in favor of helping people who really need it, but...);
- (3) sin license - in which the speaker specifically notes his or her sensitivity to the rule he or she is about to break (e.g. I know it's probably rude to say this, but);
- (4) cognitive disclaimer - in which the speaker, in light of a potential rule breaking

utterance, makes note of the potential for his action to be labelled irrational (e.g. I know this sounds crazy, but...);

- (5) appeal for a suspension of judgement - in which the speaker attempts to provide a particular context for an upcoming utterance, without which that utterance could not be properly understood (e.g. Now don't get me wrong...)

Others have looked at a kind of preventative that focuses on perceptions that an utterance or utterances violate some kind of Gricean maxim and, therefore, would be at odds with the goal of cooperative interaction. *Licenses* (Mura, 1983) or *hedges* (Brown & Levinson, 1978) are attempts by a speaker to signal the hearer that the potentially maxim-flouting utterance is, in fact, adhering to these cooperative rules. Licensing addressed to the Quality maxim, for example, may render phrases like "to tell the truth," "in a manner of speaking," "to be quite honest," etc., whereas examples of licensing relative to the Quantity maxim may include "in a nutshell," "to make a long story short," or "to get right to the point."

Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) have considered the notion of *repairs*, which are actions that attempt to make amends after the perceived mistake occurs. They argue that there is a preference in conversational structure for what they call *self-repair*, meaning that "the person who accomplishes the repair is usually the one who produces the problematic item in the first place" (McLaughlin, 1984:208-209). They further note that self-repair normally occurs within the turn-construction unit, since the end of that unit would suggest a possible switch of speaker and, thus, a potentially lost opportunity to make the repair. Additionally, analysis has focused on *other-initiated repair* (Remler, 1978; Jefferson, 1972) with a focus on the way such repairs are called for and the nature of the repairs themselves, although others (Jefferson & Schenkein, 1978) have looked beyond this at repairs that seem to be related to the conversational maxims.

Additionally, repairs have been examined relative to the turn-taking system (McLaughlin & Cody, 1982; Merritt, 1982; Reardon, 1982) and those relative to behaviors which do not specifically violate any conversational maxim or rule (e.g. some objectionable opinion or statement or some offensive action), but which are nonetheless perceived as undesirable (Blumstein 1974; Harre 1977; McLaughlin, Cody & O'Hair 1983; Schonbach 1980; Scott & Lyman 1968; Sykes & Matza 1957).

In this study, I will not explore exhaustively the preventative and repair features of this data. However, I will draw upon some of Hewitt and Stokes' (1975) preventatives in my discussion in Chapter 4, arguing that these features are used by speakers as strategies that attempt to signal the hearer that the speaker is marking distance between his own identity and a potentially face-threatening upcoming utterance.

1.3.5 Openings and Closings

Conversational analysis has also concerned itself with investigation of features in conversation that are larger discourse units. Some have investigated units of this type that Goffman (1971) has identified as *access rituals* , in which participants in conversation negotiate the initiation (openings) and conclusion (closings) of interaction. Those who have looked at openings (Crawford, 1977; Krivonos & Knapp, 1975; Laver, 1981; Nofsinger, 1975; Schegloff, 1968; Schiffrin ,1977) and closings (Albert & Kessler, 1978; Clark & French, 1981; Knapp, Hart, Friederich & Shulman, 1973; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) have demonstrated that these two sequences appear to reflect each other in structure, with closings reversing the ritual order of the openings. Additionally, some conversation analysts have looked at stories as specific discourse units (Beach & Japp, 1983; McLaughlin, Cody, Kane & Robey, 1981; Jefferson, 1978; Ryave, 1978), which, it has been claimed (Sacks, 1974) have “three linearly ordered

subsections” (McLaughlin, 1984:186) which are: (1) the preface sequence, (2) the telling sequence and (3) the closing sequence (Sacks 1974), and which serve multifunctions within the conversational event.

1.3.6 Adjacency Pairs and Preference Organization

Building on notions of the organization of conversation at an utterance-by-utterance level, the notion of conditional relevance has been proposed (Schegloff, 1972) , to describe the phenomenon in which if:

one utterance (A) is conditionally relevant on another (S), then the occurrence of S provides for the relevance of the occurrence of A. If A occurs, it occurs (i.e. is produced and heard) as “responsive” to S, i.e., in a serial or sequenced relation to it; and, it does not occur, its non-occurrence is an event, i.e., it is not only non-occurring (as is each member of an indefinitely extendable list of possible occurrences), it is absent, or “officially” or “notably” absent ” (76).

In other words, certain utterances solicit other specific kinds of utterances as responses, operating to help organize the conversation at the local, utterance level. The popular analytic framework to describe this concept has been called *adjacency pairs* (Schegloff, 1977), which are said to be characterized in the following way:

adjacency pairs are sequences of two utterances that are:

- (i) adjacent
- (ii) produced by different speakers
- (iii) ordered as a **first part** and a **second part**
- (iv) typed, so that a particular first part requires a particular second (or range of second parts) -e.g. offers require acceptances or rejections, greetings require greetings, and so on

and there is a rule governing the use of adjacency pairs, namely:

Having produced a first pair part of some pair, current speaker must stop speaking, and next speaker must produce at that point a second part to the same pair (Levinson 1983: 303 - 304; emphasis his).

Some have claimed that adjacency pairs are the fundamental unit of conversational organization (Coulthard, 1970, 1977; Goffman, 1976; Owen, 1981) and many such

pairs have been identified: question/answer, greeting/greeting, compliment/accept-reject, apology/accept-refuse, accuse/deny-confess, to name a few. (Benoit, 1980; Jacobs & Jackson, 1979). However, problems with the adjacency pair model have been noted and some have criticized it for not taking into account the reality of *insertion sequences* (Garvey, 1977; Schegloff, 1972), for its weakness in adequately defining what constitutes an adjacency pair (Levinson, 1981), and for its failure to account for many examples that do not fit the framework (Wells, MacLure, & Montgomery, 1981).

Building on the adjacency pair framework, it has been argued that not all second pair parts of an adjacency pair are of equal status, rather some are *preferred* and others *dispreferred* (Levinson, 1983: 332). This preference organization has been compared to the linguistic concept of markedness (e.g. Comrie, 1976), in that preferred seconds (like unmarked categories) have less material than do dispreferred (or marked) second pair parts. Levinson (1983:334) notes that dispreferred are characterized in several ways:

- (a) *delays*: (i) by pause before delivery, (ii) by the use of a preface (see (b)), (iii) by displacement over a number of turns via use of *repair initiators* or insertion sequences,
- (b) *prefaces* : (i) the use of markers or announcers of dispreferreds like *Uh* and *Well*, (ii) the production of token agreements before disagreements, (iii) the use of appreciations if relevant (for offers, invitations, suggestions, advice), (iv) the use of apologies if relevant (for requests, invitations, etc.), (v) the use of qualifiers (e.g. *I don't know for sure, but ...*), (vi) hesitation in various forms, including self-editing,
- (c) *accounts*: carefully formulated explanations for why the (dispreferred) act is being done,
- (d) *declination component*: of a form suited to the nature of the first part of the pair, but characteristically indirect or mitigated.

(334 - 335; italics his)

Furthermore, preference organization also appears to operate across turns, as evidenced by the notion of repair (Schegloff, et al., 1977) discussed earlier, such that there appears to be a preference ranking for types of repair, as indicated below (Levinson, 1983):

Preference 1 is for self-initiated self-repair in opportunity 1 (own turn)
Preference 2 is for self-initiated self-repair in opportunity 2 (transition space)
Preference 3 is for other-initiation, by NTRI [next turn repair initiator; brackets mine] in opportunity 3 (next turn), of self-repair (in the turn after that)
Preference 4 is for other-initiated other-repair in opportunity 3 (next turn) (341)

Thus, preference organization not only seems to deal with preferred and dispreferred second pair parts of adjacency pairs, but operates as well over the larger turn-taking system of conversation, ordering the kinds of repairs that are attempted.

1.3.7 Constructed Dialogue

Another recent investigation of conversational features concerns the notion of *constructed dialogue*, which can be best understood by accessing the concept of *staging* (Brown & Yule, 1983), which can be described as “concerned with how linear organization can be manipulated to bring some items and events into greater prominence than others” (134). While many (e.g., Clements, 1979; Grimes, 1975) have argued that staging is a kind of thematisation at the level of sentence or clause, Brown and Yule (1983) have expanded that notion to claim that it occurs at the discourse level. Staging is employed when “a specific setting or frame is established as background in order that a particular topical contribution can be given warranted prominence in the foreground” (Yule & Mathis, 1990), and specifically focuses on efforts by a speaker to give emphasis or call attention to something.

One particularly interesting kind of staging that appears a great deal in the data analyzed in this study, is what is termed *constructed dialogue*. Constructed dialogue can be defined as “... fragments of speech which have all the formal markings of direct, or quoted speech, but which were (in all likelihood) not actually uttered by the person(s) they are attributed to” (Yule and Mathis, 1990). Constructed dialogue is a term that has

developed out of the concept of reported speech, but which, as Tannen (1989) points out, subsumes that concept. Tannen argues that much of what appears in discourse as reported speech was never actually uttered by anyone else in any form and, even if it were, when the utterance is repeated by a current speaker, it exists primarily as an element of the reporting context and the words cease to be those of the person to whom they are attributed and become the words of the reporter, i.e. it is a new creative activity. Therefore, "...when speakers cast the words of others in dialogue, they are not reporting so much as constructing dialogue" (Tannen, 1989:133).

It has been pointed out that constructed dialogue can be used by speakers to displace responsibility for what is being conveyed (Brody, 1991). Furthermore, constructed dialogue can be seen as a form of dramatization in which speakers become actors on a stage and act out the message they are attempting to convey (Tannen, 1986). As Wierzbicka (1974) notes: "The person who reports another's words by quoting them, temporarily assumes the role of that other person, 'plays his part', that is to say, imagines himself as the other person and for a moment behaves in accordance with the counterfactual assumption" (1974:272). Because of this kind of dramatization, it has been suggested that the "...construction of dialogue represents an active, creative, transforming move which expresses the relationship not between the quoted party and the topic, but rather the quoting party and the audience to whom the quotation is delivered" and thus "... by giving voice to characters, dialogue makes story into drama and listeners into an interpreting audience to the drama" (Tannen, 1989:109). Furthermore, it is "...this active participation in sensemaking that contributes to the creation of involvement" (Tannen, 1989:133). This "creation of involvement" through constructed dialogue helps make the speech event what Brenneis calls "shared territory" (Brenneis, 1986). In other words, the construction and interpretation of meaning (even

in a speech event so single-speaker dominated as a sermon) is not the sole task of the speaker, but a joint , cooperative effort. Like Tannen, Brenneis argues that the audience is crucial to the construction and interpretation of meaning. In fact, in his estimation "...traditional approaches to understanding meaning have focused too much on the role of speaker at the expense of understanding and obscuring the very active roles others may be playing..." and further, that "...audience not only shape talk, but are actively involved in defining how it is to be understood" (Brenneis, 1986:339).

Tannen (1986;1989) argues that the constructed dialogue framework is a more accurate means of describing the phenomenon than is the notion of direct or reported speech, and there are a number of examples within the data I analyzed to support this position. One reason concerns the contextual nature of constructed dialogue, in which the constructed speech is attributed to another speaker at another time in another place, i.e. a different context than the context of utterance. Sternberg (1982) writes:

What the traditional view overlooks is, first of all, the extent to which the very structure of report gives rise to contextual clash or friction between the reporting and the reported speech-events. For reported discourse yokes together two (or more) speech-events that are by nature removed from each other in time and place and state of affairs, in the identity of the participants, in their characters, outlooks, interpersonal relations. . . . Owing to these inherent and often deliberately activated and patterned discrepancies, the frame not simply introduces and incorporates the displaced quote, but always colors and comments on it by way of implicit opposition. (1982:72)

Secondly, it seems clear that in many cases constructed dialogue does not claim to be attributable to a real speaker in another context, but is clearly interpreted as hypothetical. In the data I analyzed (especially Chapter 2), much of the constructed dialogue is of this nature, which gives credence to the notion of constructed dialogue as staged drama, rather than direct quotation. For example, in the following extract (1) from Chapter 2 (The Sermon Event) the speaker uses the lexical item "think"(line 1) to

indicate that the focus of his message at this point concerns the kind of thoughts or opinions one holds, and not necessarily any specific utterance. His use of the phrase “We say” (line 2) to introduce the constructed dialogue can then be interpreted as an indication of this kind of inner speaking or kind of thoughts, rather than utterance.

Extract 1

- 1 And you know what we think today? We think exactly the opposite.**
- 2 We think God's our servant. Now you think about that. We say,**
- 3 “God I want you to do this for me. God I want you to do this for me.**
- 4 God would you help me out in this situation.” We act like God's our**
- 5 servant. Which the opposite is really true. We're to be servants of God.**

Furthermore, in extract 2 (taken from Chapter 4, the Bible Study event), the speaker is talking about a hypothetical situation, as indicated by his use of the phrase “confrontational-type thing” and the hypothetical/conditional marker “if” in line 2, as well as the indefinite article “a” in lines 2 - 4. These markers can be interpreted by the hearer as indication that the described situation is not to be taken by the hearer as being an actual, historical one, but interpreted as a representation of something hypothetical. Thus, the dialogue constructed for this hypothetical situation is interpreted as a typification of the kind of dialogue that might actually occur, although this particular dialogue is not claimed to be such.

Extract 2

- 1 I don't ever see,**
- 2 even if, even if it's sort of a confrontation type thing,**
- 3 like if it's a,**

- 4 you go into a pastor and say,
 5 "Hey, look I'm really uncomfortable with what we're doing. I don't like
 6 this, whatever," you know.

Finally, there are examples (see Chapter 2) in which constructed dialogue is attributed to non-human beings, in this case a supernatural or divine being. In extract 3, the speaker is recounting the words of God at creation (line 3), as recorded in the Bible in the book of Genesis, although the dialogue he constructs is obviously a creative approximation of what the Scriptures records.

Extract 3

- 1 Or what, how did God create this world? With His spoken word, did
 2 He not? The power that is in the Word. What did He say? He said,
 3 "Light. Be." And there was light. He said, "Earth and heavens divide."
 4 And it happened. There's power, you see, in the Word. All power is in
 5 the Word.

In my analysis of the data represented in this study, I will draw upon this notion of constructed dialogue to account for features of the Sermon Event (Chapter 2), where its various types will be exemplified. I will also access this notion to account for features of the Oral Testimony in Chapter 3, wherein a speaker makes use of constructed dialogue in an attempt to invite the hearer to share in the recounted experience. Finally, in Chapter 3 (The Bible Study event) I will explore the use of constructed dialogue as a strategy by which the speakers attempt to mark distance between their potentially

face-threatening acts and their own responsibility for the negative reception by the hearers those acts might effect.

1.3.8 A Hearer-Based Approach

Much of conversation analysis has focused an inordinate amount of attention on the role of speaker, to a neglect of the crucial role of the hearer in cooperatively constructed and negotiated interaction. However, some researchers have attempted to address the role of hearer by investigations of such things as listener gaze (Goodwin, 1981) in the regulation of conversation, specifically, in this case, the turn-taking system. Goodwin argues for “the orientation of speakers to producing sentences that are attended to appropriately by their recipients (1981:59) and that, in part, this can account for turn construction units (Sacks et al, 1978) and the length of a turn as well. Goodwin further notes that the hearer’s role in providing gaze for the speaker helps account for the disengagement of a turn by a speaker as well as the phenomenon of simultaneous talk. (128)

Bublitz (1988) likewise emphasizes the importance to cooperative conversation of the overall role of the hearer:

Cooperation is essential for the securing of comprehension and for the development and strengthening of the relations between participants in everyday conversations. It presupposes activities which do not so much accompany the conversation as create it in the first place, and which must necessarily be speaker- *and* hearer-based, or rather, originate in all those directly participating. The traditional division between the so-called productive, or speaker side and the so-called receptive or hearer side could lead to the false conclusion that the speaker is actively doing something . . . whereas the hearer is adopting a passive position. . . In actual fact, the hearer . . . is also doing something, is performing different kinds of action ”(143).

In his analysis, Bublitz describes three types of participant roles: primary speaker, secondary speaker and hearer. He defines the primary speaker as one who makes a major speaker contribution to the topic, a secondary speaker as one who makes a minor

speaker contribution, and the hearer as “any participant who performs either just the basic communicative action of HEARING or in addition that of SPEAKING, provided that he confines himself to signalling linguistically that he is taking note of what has been said and heard, and thus to performing the complex communicative action of GIVING A HEARER SIGNAL ” (161). Bublitz argues that these participant roles work cooperatively in everyday conversation toward “agreement, consent, conformance and endorsement,” (264) or, in other words, harmonious relations.

In the analysis of the data in this study, although I will not specifically use the framework and terminology proposed by Bublitz (nor will I consider speaker gaze, as discussed by Goodwin), I will adhere to the notion that hearers are crucial to the understanding of the systematic regulation of conversational interaction and jointly negotiated and cooperatively constructed meaning. This notion will be particularly salient in my discussions of the data in Chapters 4 (the Bible Study) and 5 (Dinner Conversations), as I will offer an analysis that focuses not on what speakers are purportedly saying and meaning by their utterances, but rather on how speakers appear to be interpreting the speaker’s contributions, and how the responses of hearers (both potential and actual) influence and constrain what speakers do with language.

1.4 Social Reality, Social Relationship and Language Behavior

1.4.1 Influence of Social Psychology

The sociolinguistic investigation of language use has been greatly influenced since the early 1970’s by contributions from the field of social psychology (e.g., Giles & Powesland, 1975; Giles & St. Clair, 1979; Markova, 1978; Robinson, 1972; St. Clair & Giles, 1980; Scherer & Giles, 1979) concerning the nature of social reality, social relationships and language behavior. It has been noted (Giles, Robinson & Smith,

1980) that “far from being the passive automatic reflection of an underlying social reality, [language behavior] is the product of individuals who are actively engaged in the construction of social reality who perhaps, as often as not, use language to create and manage situations and impressions.” (2, brackets mine)

Drawing from an ethnomethodological concept of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1936; Meltzer, Petras & Reynolds, 1975; Shibutani, 1961; 1966; Strauss, 1959), social psychology has emphasized the notion of language as a mediating symbolic system between the encoding and decoding of cognitive plans. Symbolic interactionism is a phenomenon “whereby people approach each other with fixed meanings based on a preliminary definition of the situation, but as the interaction continues, both mutually influence the other, and the meanings that finally result are the products of compromise and accommodation.” (St. Clair & Giles, 1980:22) In this approach, interaction is of primary importance because what is salient is not the linguistic code per se, but the inferences drawn by interactants from that code, which is the basis for what Garfinkel (1967) refers to as dyadic communication. In other words, “it is not what people actually say that is important but what they mean to say ” (St. Clair & Giles, 1980:23), and the meaning actually evolves through the process of symbolic interaction (Hewitt, 1976; Lauer & Handel, 1977; Manis & Meltzer, 1967). This emphasis on linguistic representation of social reality differs from the more traditional sociolinguistic approach of looking at linguistic variables as defining social group membership (e.g., Labov, 1966; 1972).

Social psychology has also helped the sociolinguist focus on language as a factor that allows social categorizations, inferences, and evaluations of the interactant and the situation to be made that are cognitively organized with present expectations, past experiences, belief and value systems and the like. In this sense, language behavior also

acts as an independent variable for cognitive organization. (Smith, Giles & Hewstone, 1980:287, in St. Clair & Giles, 1980). The individuals' cognitive organization of his or her perception of the situation, his or her own behavior and perceptions concerning behavior of the other interactants, provides a framework for inference and interpretation. Smith, Giles & Hewstone (1980) propose that there are five social psychological theories that offer insight into this notion of cognitive organization and how interactants construct such an organization via interaction. Cognitive uncertainty theory (Berger, 1979; Berger & Calabrese, 1975) argues that in initial encounters, wherein the situation is uncertain, interactants make strategic attempts to reduce uncertainty and make the situation more predictable. Causal attribution theory (Harvey, Ickes & Kidd, 1976; Jones & Davis, 1965) proposes that interactants observe and assess other interactants behavior, subsequently attributing to them certain intentions which, in turn, influences the observers own behavior. Affective reinforcement theory (Bryne, 1971; Grush, Clore & Costin, 1975) suggests that our attraction to others is related to the degree to which we share important beliefs in common, resulting in a positive reinforcement of our personal identity if such agreement exists. Finally, Gain-Loss theory (Aronson & Linder, 1965) purports that people tend to be most attracted to those for whom they have great admiration and Social Identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; 1978) "suggests that we are not only concerned with attaining interindividual rewards and a positive self-esteem but also that we desire a favorable *group* esteem." (Smith, et al, 1980:289)

Therefore, under the influence of frameworks such as these, speakers approach a given situation with certain predisposed models of social reality, which are subsequently augmented and elaborated as a result of their active engagement in interaction with others via language.

They seek information without waiting for it to impinge upon them, combine and re-combine it in lay theorizing about their world so as to extend the explanatory and predictive power of their theories, while yet minimizing their complexity. They apply their theories to organize their own behavior and, with others, to create social reality. They test theories by devising new, better or simpler ways of achieving their social goals, revising them as the outcomes seem to demand. Moreover, individuals do this, not alone, but in concert with others . . . [therefore] . . . models are in fact largely and intentionally *shared* models, joint creations of participants, providing agreed (“negotiated”) bases for understanding and situational engineering “ (Smith, et al, 1980:265 - 66, italics theirs, brackets mine).

Therefore, social psychology has aided the sociolinguist by providing input on some of the important social psychological constructs (e.g. social identity, cognitive organization) that are represented in a variety of linguistic variables systematically featured in situations of interaction via language.

One of the frameworks that reflects a greater interest in the linguistic representation of social relationships is speech accommodation theory (SAT) (Ball, Giles & Hewstone, 1985; Coupland, 1980; Giles, 1980; 1984; Giles, Taylor & Bourhis, 1973; Trudgill, 1981; Street & Giles, 1982), which “focuses on the social cognitive processes mediating individuals’ perceptions of the environment and their communicative behaviors . . . [and provides insight concerning] social psychological concepts and processes for understanding the dynamics of speech diversity in social settings ” (Giles, Mulac, Bradac & Johnson, 1987:14). SAT proposes that there are two basic strategies optional for speakers in a given social event: convergence, in which individuals adapt their speech to those of others along a range of linguistic variables and divergence, in which speakers mark differences between self and others. These strategies fit in with the notion that human beings possess a measure of self-worth based in part on their assessment of their own actions, feelings, beliefs, etc., and also, from a symbolic interactionist perspective, from evaluating how others see self. The interplay between intraindividual comparison (Giles, et al, 1987:34) and intergroup evaluation

influences an individual's assessment of the affect of his social identity within an interactive event. Based on these assessments, "during interaction individuals are motivated to adjust (or to accomodate) their speech styles as a strategy for gaining one or more of the following goals: evoking listeners' social approval, attaining communicational efficiency between interactants, and maintaining positive social identities. In addition, it is the individual's *perception* of the other's speech that will determine his or her evaluative and communicative responses[convergence or divergence]" (1987:15, brackets mine; italics theirs). Depending, then, upon the results of the individuals' assessments of the social factors in play, convergence or divergence strategies may be implemented.

SAT has investigated a number of features claimed to mark convergence and divergence, such as pronunciation (Giles, 1973), speech rate (Webb, 1970), pause and utterance lengths (Jaffe & Feldstein, 1987; Matarazzo, 1973), vocal intensity (Natale, 1975) language choice or variety (Giles, Taylor & Bourhis, 1973), accent shift (Giles & Powesland, 1975), code-switching (Bourhis 1979; Giles, Bourhis & Taylor 1977; Scotton & Ury, 1977) and slang or jargon (Danet, 1980; Drake, 1980; Wober, 1980).

1.4.2 Social Deixis

Social markers in speech have also been investigated from the perspective of their indication of group membership and it has been claimed "that social categories of age, sex, ethnicity, social class and situation can be clearly marked on the basis of speech, and that such categorization is fundamental to social organization even though many of the categories are also easily discriminated on other bases "(Giles, Scherer & Taylor, 1979:351). Linguistic features of regional dialects is one such social marker that has been extensively investigated (e.g., Labov, 1966; 1972; Sankoff, 1973; 1975; Sankoff &

Cedergren, 1971; Shuy, Wolfram & Riley, 1968; Trudgill, 1974; Weinreich, 1968; Wolfram & Fasold, 1974) as have been various manipulations of linguistic repertoire (e.g., Agar, 1973; Bauman & Sherzer, 1974; Geertz, 1960; Gumperz, 1972; Gumperz and Hymes, 1972; Sanches & Blount, 1976). However, not only do social markers imply delineations of group membership along parameters of ingroup/outgroup interaction, but can also suggest much “finer-grained distinctions” within groups, i.e. the intragroup relationships between members (Brown & Levinson, 1978:317). As has been previously discussed, human beings are concerned with the presentation and maintenance of their social identity in interaction with others and specifically desire to present themselves in a favorable light, relative to the demands of the social/speech event. Therefore, it becomes crucial that social relationships in a given situation be marked as properly aligned, and there appear to be two basic ways in which this can be done.

First of all, socially deictic markers are “aspects of language structure that encode social identities of participants (properly, incumbents of participant-roles), or the social relationship between them, or between one of them and persons and entities referred to” (Levinson, 1983:89). Socially deictic markers can take the form of honorifics, where relative rank or respect is marked, such as is evidenced in the Tu/Vous distinction (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Filmore, 1975; Hollos, 1977; Lambert & Tucker, 1976; Levinson, 1977; Paulston, 1976; Slobin, 1963). In addition to honorifics, other social relationships, such as kinship, can also be grammaticalized.

In addition to social deixis, speakers can mark social relationships by the strategic choice of means of message expression so that “the motivations for modifying the expression of speech acts are visible in the particular modifications that are chosen, and on the basis of these we can identify the strategies that actors are pursuing in their

speech” (Brown & Levinson, 1979:320). One example of this kind of strategic modification of speech is the politeness strategies framework of Brown and Levinson (1987) previously discussed. Other types of strategies tied to social relationships (such as ways of greeting) have also been investigated (e.g., Gossen, 1975; Irvine, 1975; Keenan, 1974; Sanches & Blount, 1975; Sherzer, 1983).

1.5 Religious Speech

Religious experience and practice is another area of human behavior in which language plays an important role relative to the social realities of the group. A sociolinguistic investigation of religious language will be specifically concerned with how language is manipulated in religious ways to reinforce the social identity of the group. It should be noted that religious communities are not only defined by their common set of beliefs and practices, but often are set apart by language (or systematic manipulation of it) as well. Manipulation of this sort has led, in some groups, to a special language specifically reserved for religious use (e.g., Worsley, 1957; Zaretsky, 1972) or, specifically marked registers or styles of speaking within a larger language (e.g., delivery of Pentecostal oral testimonies in Samarin 1972, or sermon styles in Rosenberg, 1988). In addition, Samarin (1976) points out:

Linguistic adaptation to religious needs is not limited to the selection of linguistic resources for the creation of special varieties of language. It also leads to special kinds of discourse. The “language” of religion - the means whereby religion expresses itself - therefore consists of genres like song, recitations, prayer, and magical or divinational formulae. Here the domain specificity of religious language may be seen, perhaps more clearly than anywhere else (Samarin, 1976:9).

It can be said that language used for religious purposes can be exploited in two basic ways. First of all, by means of a manipulation of the vast linguistic options a language affords, participants in a community can both celebrate and create religious

experience. Events in which historically situated religious experiences (such as conversions) are recounted can , through linguistic maneuvering, become reconstitutions of those experiences, as well as initiate an entirely new experience situated in the reporting event.

Secondly, language is a mediating system that can be used by participants to transform secular experiences into the province of the sacred reality of the community and provide a way for members of a group to make sense of, and interpret, the secular world in sacred terms, which are frequently more compelling and powerful for the community and indispensable for interpreting the meaning of the everyday. So powerful is the sacred reality for many groups that “religion may be the source or determiner of a society’s metalinguistic notions ” (Samarin, 1976:11). In the religious community I investigated in this study, there is a strong notion that words and the use or manipulation of them has divinely inspired creative power and empower a human being to not only “say” but “do” things in the secular world, with decidedly religious consequences. The pastor of this religious community explains in one of his sermons:

Extract 4

Part of the likeness that we have with God is that we have the ability to speak to, to communicate in words. Now, man was made to talk. Man was made to talk from creature to creature. Man was also made to talk from creature to God. And, man was given the ability to create with his words. Words would become mighty tools in the mouth of man.

Much has been done to investigate patterns of religious speech as one of many features within a larger socially organized community, not specifically defined by religion (e.g., Gossen, 1974b; Howe, 1976; Malinowski, 1935; Rosaldo, 1973; 1975;

Sherzer, 1983; Tambiah, 1968). However, much less has been done to investigate the language use, from a linguistic perspective, of speech communities defined as such by religion, although anthropological and folklorist investigations are more prevalent (Rosenberg, 1988; Wicks, 1983).

Among the exceptions to this are various investigations of the speech of Pentecostals (Lawless, 1983; Maltz, 1984; Samarin, 1972; 1976; Williams, 1981; Zaretsky, 1972), particularly the phenomenon of glossalalia or “speaking in tongues,” characteristic, in fact definitive, of these groups. Samarin (1976) has argued, for example, that glossalalia is linguistic evidence of a particular religious experience, but that, in addition, participants in the group must be able to talk about, in language appropriate for the group, their experiences and beliefs (1976:7) .

Lawless (1983) has also investigated Pentecostal speech, specifically women’s speech in religious services. She notes that in Pentecostal religious services, women are restricted verbally and kinesically behind the pulpit and, in fact, are under even greater control and subordination within the overall life of the religious community, which is decidedly male-dominated. However, “ from her pew the Pentecostal woman can stand and speak; from that position she and the members of her sister group are able to transform the service through their verbal powers. They gain control through verbal art - short-lived control, to be sure, but a masterful illustration of the power of words ” (1983:458).

Borker (1986) has investigated the speech of Scottish Brethren in two worship services, arguing that one is perceived by participants as “led by the Spirit” whereas the other is not. She further notes that “ the experience of a meeting as led (or not led) by the Spirit is the result of a complex interaction of semantic and structural processes and their realization in the meeting itself. For the Brethren, the spontaneous unity of voice

that proclaims the presence of the Spirit lies in the enactment of a delicate balance of the possible, the familiar, but not totally expected, in multiple speech acts by multiple speakers “ (1986:335). Her analysis, like mine in this study, is situated in the notion that meaning is “ a dynamic co-creation of speaker, audience and the symbols they use ” (1986:318).

Others have investigated the speech of Quakers (e.g., Bauman, 1974; 1983; Davies, 1988). Bauman (1974) discusses the role of the Quaker minister which, he argues, is to mediate “the tension between the natural and the spiritual faculties - between speaking and silence “ (1974:159). For Quakers the essence of religious experience was to make one’s life “maximally expressive of spiritual truth, with the understanding that a silence of the outward man was the best possible way of doing so “(159). As a preacher of the Word, the Quaker minister’s role is to synthesize the two opposing principles of speaking and silence by speaking that is directed at achieving silence in the hearers (154 - 155). Quakers believed that God spoke within and through them and, thus, they “elevated speaking and silence to an especially high degree of symbolic centrality and importance.” (Bauman, 1983:30) And, whereas speaking was considered a carnal activity (unless it was God’s speaking through man), silence was revered as “self-sacrifice in a most immediate sense, the sacrifice of self-will through suppression of the earthly self, [and] was one means of reenacting the crucifixion, of ‘taking up the cross,’ and thus of attaining the proper state of spiritual grace” (1983:22). Consequently, as Davies (1988) notes, both silence and speaking “ are necessary but the unmarked form is always silence and therefore to speak is an effort (hence perhaps the attested psychological stress and physical strain that precede it). Speaking arises out of silence and is a means to the end of even deeper silence “ (1988:118).

Demarest (1975) investigates the oral testimonies of Christian Scientists, noting that speakers in this religious community transform, via language, everyday experiences by interpreting them within their sacred social reality, i.e. "Science." Through the oral testimonies, she says, Christian Scientists

use a specialized language variety with its patterns and sequences in the recounting of 'work' and 'healing' experiences, employed according to specifiable rules of performance, interpretation, and interaction, conditioned by the socially acknowledged purpose of 'giving testimony.' In so doing, 'Scientists' achieve an ongoing accomplishment of interpretive transformation by which they transfer the accent of reality from the everyday to the 'Science' province of meaning, thereby establishing solidarity within a community which shares in and sanctions that transformation " (1975:34).

In conclusion it is fair to say that members of a social group can employ a variety of syntactic, semantic and discourse features to accomplish specific religious ends, which will be demonstrated in the analysis of the data within this study.

1.6 The Natalbany Baptist Church Community

1.6.1 Direction of Analysis in This Study

In my analysis , I will investigate the language behavior of members of a Southern Baptist church community in a variety of speech events, both sacred and secular. I will discuss the various linguistic devices used by these speakers to actively create social reality and accomplish religious and social goals.

Operating within a broad understanding of the ethnographic notion of symbolic interactionism, my emphasis herein will be on interaction as a process by which participants in speech events actively and cooperatively negotiate meaning and construct reality, rather than simply reflecting that reality in their speech.

I will also work within the realm of the general framework and emphasis suggested by speech accommodation theory, namely that individuals (1) make observations of the

social environment of the speech event, their own contributions to that event, and those of others in order to make an assessment of the reception of their social identity (expressed via speech) by others and (2) subsequently, they accommodate their speech, not necessarily toward the speech patterns of the others, but toward the kind of linguistic behavior preferred by the group as reflected in the mutually agreed upon social goal for that particular speech event. In the case of the Bible Study event (Chapter Four), for example, I will argue that speakers employ a variety of linguistic devices which can be interpreted as an attempt by the speakers to achieve a positive reception of their selves by others for the creation of social harmony. In the analysis of the Dinner conversations (Chapter Five), it will be noted that speakers use irony as a means of orienting (or accommodating) their speech behavior to the group goal of creating shared experience and knowledge in the interest of reaffirming their relationships with one another.

Finally, I will look at social markers in speech of intragroup relationships from the perspective of strategies for modification of speech (e.g. politeness strategies), rather than arguing for linguistic markers in speech as evidence of group membership.

1.62 Ethnography of the Speech Community

The speech community investigated in this study is a small, Southern Baptist church located on Highway 51, north of Hammond, Louisiana. Natalbany Baptist Church was founded in 1905 when the community of Natalbany was a bustling manufacturing center. Since its inception, Natalbany has been as much a family grouping as a religious one. Most of the members are related to each other and, in many cases, live in close physical proximity to each other in the nearby areas around

Natalbany. The church is a rural church and most of the members are of the working class, finding employment as mill foremen, mechanics, salesmen, teachers, secretaries, farmers and the like. The church is composed of a rather well-established, stable membership, with few regular additions. When new members join they are most often members of other Baptist churches who have decided to change the location of their membership, a move referred to as "moving one's church letter." When new converts are added from personal and/or religious backgrounds that are far removed from those of this rural, Southern Baptist church, the new members are often obvious in their lack of proficiency in the manipulation of the community's code of speaking, as well as code of behavior. It can be argued that the stability and well-established history of this church contributes to the rather consistent code of speaking that flows so naturally for those who are members, but which marks the new member as a novice.

The church is part of the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in America, which is a generally fundamentalist, evangelical denomination that holds the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and salvation to be effected only through a rebirth experience in which one specifically and formally makes a conversion to Christ. The denomination is not creedal in its doctrine, nor hierarchical in its ecclesiastical structure, nor liturgical in its worship. Rather, each individual congregation is autonomous and free to pursue its own goals, follow its own conscience and conduct its own affairs without interference from a larger body.

In spite of the emphasis on autonomy and what they call "the competency of the soul in religion," Southern Baptist churches are linked together and identified by a broad set of commonly held beliefs and practices. This broad set of doctrines was put into a written statement in 1963 and called The Baptist Faith and Message. This brief document was explicated in a study book written by a leading Baptist minister and

published in 1971 under the same title (Hobbs, 1971). In the preface to this book, the author states its purpose:

It would be impossible for any one person to write an official statement of the Baptist faith and message. The writer of this book is a Southern Baptist. However, in no sense is this work a binding statement of faith and message for Southern Baptists. It is one Baptist's effort to interpret a statement which Southern Baptist messengers in assembled session voted as comprising a treatment of those basic elements of faith generally agreed upon by Southern Baptists. In large measure it is a statement in agreement with the faith and message of Baptists everywhere (Hobbs, 1971: iv).

There is a great deal of diversity within the Southern Baptist Convention along several lines, one of which is the prevalence of practices and beliefs more usually associated with Pentecostal or Charismatic churches. Most Southern Baptist churches do not accept nor profess such practices and beliefs as "speaking in tongues", "gifts or manifestations of the Holy Spirit", "deliverance," (whereby evil spirits are exorcised from people), nor the more expressive forms of worship, such as the raising of one's hands and clapping, that are more traditionally associated with Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. However, a growing number of individual churches within the Southern Baptist Convention are adopting many of these practices and the theological rationales behind them, and are classifying themselves as "Spirit-filled" churches, due to the prominence of these practices attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. The community of Natalbany Baptist church falls within this category and distinguishes itself as a different and unique kind of Baptist church because of its acceptance of these beliefs and practices, although in actual practice these Pentecostal-like features are rare, if not almost non-existent.

This community, like the larger evangelical tradition of which it is a part, holds the Bible to be the primary authority for belief and practice, both within the structure of the church and in the conduct of one's secular life in general. They accept that

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ. (Hobbs, 1971:18)

These Christians judge all of life by the standard of the Bible and, although their personal conviction is of its infallible authority, their personal experience is not always consistent with its dictates.

The Bible is used extensively by not only the pastor, but the lay members of the congregation as well in a variety of creative ways within both marked religious events (services, prayers, Bible studies, etc.) and in events of a more secular nature (e.g., business meetings, dinner conversations, social gatherings). A great deal of prominence is attached to those who are perceived as able to effectively demonstrate a command of the Scriptures and an ability to use them creatively in a variety of settings.

The community believes that God is a living reality, existing and actively involved in the everyday lives of the members. "He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the Universe." (Hobbs, 1971:31) The community further asserts that God, in the form of the Holy Spirit, literally indwells the soul of a person commencing at the time (a specific, historical moment) of conversion and actively "enlightens and empowers the believer and the Church in worship, evangelism, and service " (1971:33). For this community, all experience (both that which is conspicuously religious, as well as that which is secular or trivial) is nothing less than a personal encounter with God. It is crucial for these believers to regard all aspects of life as inhabited and controlled by a living and actively engaged Deity.

The most important religious experience for a member of this community, and the one which defines the legitimacy of one's membership in it, is the religious conversion (referred to in the community as "being born again" or "getting saved," or "finding the Lord.") Conversion is more frequently referred to as "salvation," and is described in the Baptist Faith and Message as follows:

In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Hobbs, 1971: 55)

Clear in this statement is the idea that conversion is an act of God that requires a response by man. Hobbs further elaborates:

Regeneration is the result of conviction of sin, repentance from sin, faith in Jesus Christ and the confession of that faith. Conviction is the state of mind and heart whereby a lost person recognizes and admits his sinful state and practice... Conviction must be followed by true repentance.... True repentance will be followed by faith... If one truly repents, he will turn to Jesus Christ in faith as his Savior (Hobbs, 1971. Pg. 60 - 61).

This "faith" response by the individual to the work of God within him is not simply a mental exercise, as Hobbs further explains:

Faith means to believe. But in its truest sense it is more than intellectual. It involves an act of the will whereby one trusts in Christ and commits himself to him, to his will and way (Hobbs, 1971:61).

Therefore, with phrases like "act of the will" and "commit himself", we understand that there is, in addition to the initiating work of God, a parallel work of man to appropriate and make meaningful the salvation "gift." Appeals for the individual's response in this salvation experience most often occur at the end of a sermon during what is called the "invitation" or the "altar call." During this time, instructions are given as to the necessity of some sort of public demonstration of one's inward experience and, in some cases, elaborate arguments for such activity are outlined in what amounts to a miniature

sermon. The pastor of this community issues an appeal for action in the following example, taken from the 'invitation' section of one of his sermons:

Extract 5

Now, I ask you this morning if you need to make that decision public, you come let us pray with you and let's affirm and agree together the word . . . I'll agree with you today and you come tell me what, what God's saying to you today.

This parallel activity on the part of God and man to accomplish the conversion event is reflected in the choices the speakers make in marking their oral discourse with a variety of linguistic features (explained in Chapter 3). It is through these two actions that we further understand that there are two worlds of reality - the secular and the sacred - between which the speakers move when they are converted and that this experience is one which not only involves action and movement on the part of the speaker but in which the speaker's perspective on reality is altered and his evaluation of everyday life is transformed.

It is important to note that members of the community must be satisfied concerning the authenticity of a new convert's salvation experience in order for that new convert to be fully and officially accepted into the community and afforded the opportunity for the baptism initiation rite. Unlike many other Protestant churches, evangelical churches such as this one (and other Southern Baptist churches) do not regard baptism as sacramental, i.e. having any power to effect spiritual salvation or other spiritual blessing. For this community it is entirely symbolic and metaphoric of one's inner experience of rebirth or conversion. It is this experience that sets apart this community

from all those “out in the world ” and, at the same time, is perceived by the members as the single most effective means for successfully evangelizing those outside.

While the church is evangelistic in purpose, a great deal of emphasis is made concerning the relationships of the members to one another and the social cohesion of the community.

Whereas one is born again into the church general, he becomes a part of a local church through believer’s baptism. To the local church Jesus committed the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper that in their observance the church might witness to his saving work in its locality. Thus while salvation is synonymous with membership in the church general, it is not true with regard to local church membership. Nor is membership in the local church synonymous with salvation. “Fellowship,” not “membership,” is the New Testament word for Christian relations in the local church (Hobbs 1971:80).

Maintenance of the social relationships within this community occupies a place of great importance. Members frequently talk about their relationships to one another, borrowing heavily from biblical exhortations to “love one another,” or “dwell in unity,” or “encourage one another,” and the like. It is obvious to the observer that the members of this community do not perceive their relationships and their community (the church) to be a trivial social gathering equivalent to others to which they may belong (e.g. Rotary, the PTA, etc.). Rather, they speak of themselves in familial terms, borrowing from the Scriptures to refer to their relationship as “the family of God,” and “brothers and sisters in Christ,” with, for example, the younger members addressing older male members, and all the members addressing the pastor with the title “brother .”

Related to this is the belief among the members that all have equal access to God and do not need an ecclesiastical representative (such as a priest) in order to maintain any aspect of their relationship or experience with God (a notion referred to as the priesthood of the believer in doctrine and practice). Because of this, there is a sense among the members that they are equal in social status, rooted in their interpretation of

Scriptural texts that suggest unity based on a shared faith in Christ, and that Christ alone exists as the sole mediator between God and man. Every man or woman can hear from God individually and each person's conscience, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures, is the final arbiter of truth for that person. It would follow, then, that the community has a loose official power structure, consisting of a pastor, a group of deacons (always male), and various committees (e.g. building committee or finance committee, etc.) Every decision of the church (including hiring and firing a pastor) is subject to a majority vote of the membership at regularly scheduled business meetings (usually monthly) and the deacons and committees only have power granted to them by the congregation. However, depending on the situation of each local church, pastors and deacons can, in effect, rule with extensive authority. In this particular situation, the deacons and the pastor have a great deal of authority and most of what they decide is routinely approved by unanimous votes of the congregation. This is partly because the community is dominated by actual familial relationships (cousins, uncles, etc.) that give it a more realistic kindred sense, rather than simply a metaphoric one.

The pastor, while generally considered an equal with other members at one level, is ascribed a greater degree of spiritual authority, specifically as concerns knowledge of the Scriptures. When a pastor speaks from the pulpit, there is a special sense of his role as that of mediator between God and congregation (almost in a messianic sense) and he is viewed as one who hears directly from God in a way different and perhaps more direct than the congregation, despite their assertions of a priesthood of believers who have equal access to divine revelation. The term "pulpit" not only refers to this piece of sanctuary furniture, but is more important for its metaphoric usage describing the authority and weight given the pastor and his words when spoken in the sermon. With this idea of authority, the pulpit also signifies a social distance from the speaker to the

audience or congregation, i.e. a distance that can be said to represent the distance between God and man. Here in the pulpit area is where God speaks (through His messenger) and where the members come (to the altar) to meet God. This distance can be emphasized or deemphasized and this manipulation is marked linguistically, as well as kinetically. Kinetically, a pastor may move from behind the pulpit to one side or the other of the platform, or perhaps (in a dramatic attempt at getting down to the level of the congregation) will move to the altar area. The sermon event and the role of the pastor will be discussed further in Chapter 2, along with some examples of linguistic evidence of attempts to increase or decrease distance between the congregation and pastor .

For my analysis, I selected eight members (four married couples) of this local church congregation, between the ages of 20 and 35 (The pastor of the church was not included in this group of eight). Each of them have been actively involved in membership in the church, some of them, in addition to their roles as regular members, have been serving as deacons, music leaders in the worship services, and in the position of church secretary for some time. Included in this set of eight is the analyst himself in the role of participant/observer which is crucial to a successful ethnographic approach (Gold, 1958; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Junker 1960; Samarin, 1967; Spradley, 1979; 1980). The particular instantiation of that role for this investigator in the collection and analysis of this data will follow the model set forth in Tannen (1984):

The fact that I was a participant in the conversation entails advantages and disadvantages for analysis. An important aspect of both is that it affords analysis of a special and crucial kind of communication: talk among friends. Because some of the participants knew each other well and had histories and connections among them, meaning constructed in their talk is perhaps a bit harder for a conversational analyst to grasp, because the meaning does not reside only in the immediate conversation but has been created over time. However, difficulty for the analyst is not sufficient reason to avoid a crucial aspect of human behavior. Recording a

conversation among friends that would have taken place anyway makes available for study patterns of language use that do not emerge among strangers, such as playful routines, irony and allusion, reference to familiar jokes and assumptions. People who regularly interact with each other create a special language between and among them, a language that is called upon and built upon in their continuing interactions (1984:33).

I collected sermons by the pastor of the church (12 sermons total) over a period of three weeks, including morning and evening services . Furthermore, I collected data from the following meetings at which each of the eight members (pastor not included) were present: a meeting at which members produced their oral testimonies, a typical Bible study meeting, and three separate dinner conversations (5 hours total). All data was tape recorded with the full consent of all parties. Only the eight participants were present at each speech event (other than the sermons, where the entire congregation was present) and will be designated in transcripts by initials as R, M, J, C, D, Jn, W and T.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SERMON

2.0 Biography

The pastor of Natalbany Baptist Church is Dr. Rodney Taylor. Brother Rodney, as he is referred to by the members, has been the pastor there for fourteen years, his first tenure beginning in 1970 and lasting four years, after which he moved to Mobile, Alabama, returning to pastor Natalbany Baptist church five years later in 1981, where he has remained to the present. Taylor is a Mississippi native and demonstrates a strong dialect variation indigenous to that region. In addition, he has been formally trained at a Baptist seminary and exhibits some very specific stylistic features in his sermon delivery that are indicative of the larger community of "typical" Southern Baptist preachers.

2.1 Physical Environment

Sermons are delivered normally in the large auditorium of the church facilities. This large auditorium is called a "sanctuary" and is laid out in two basic parts: the altar/pulpit area and the congregation area (see Figure 1). The congregation area, which can be called the "listening or hearer zone," consists of two sections of pews in rows. On one side of each section of pews is an aisle and a wall of the building. On the other side of each section of pews is a center aisle. This particular aisle is of great importance and is usually used at certain points in most religious services. The pulpit

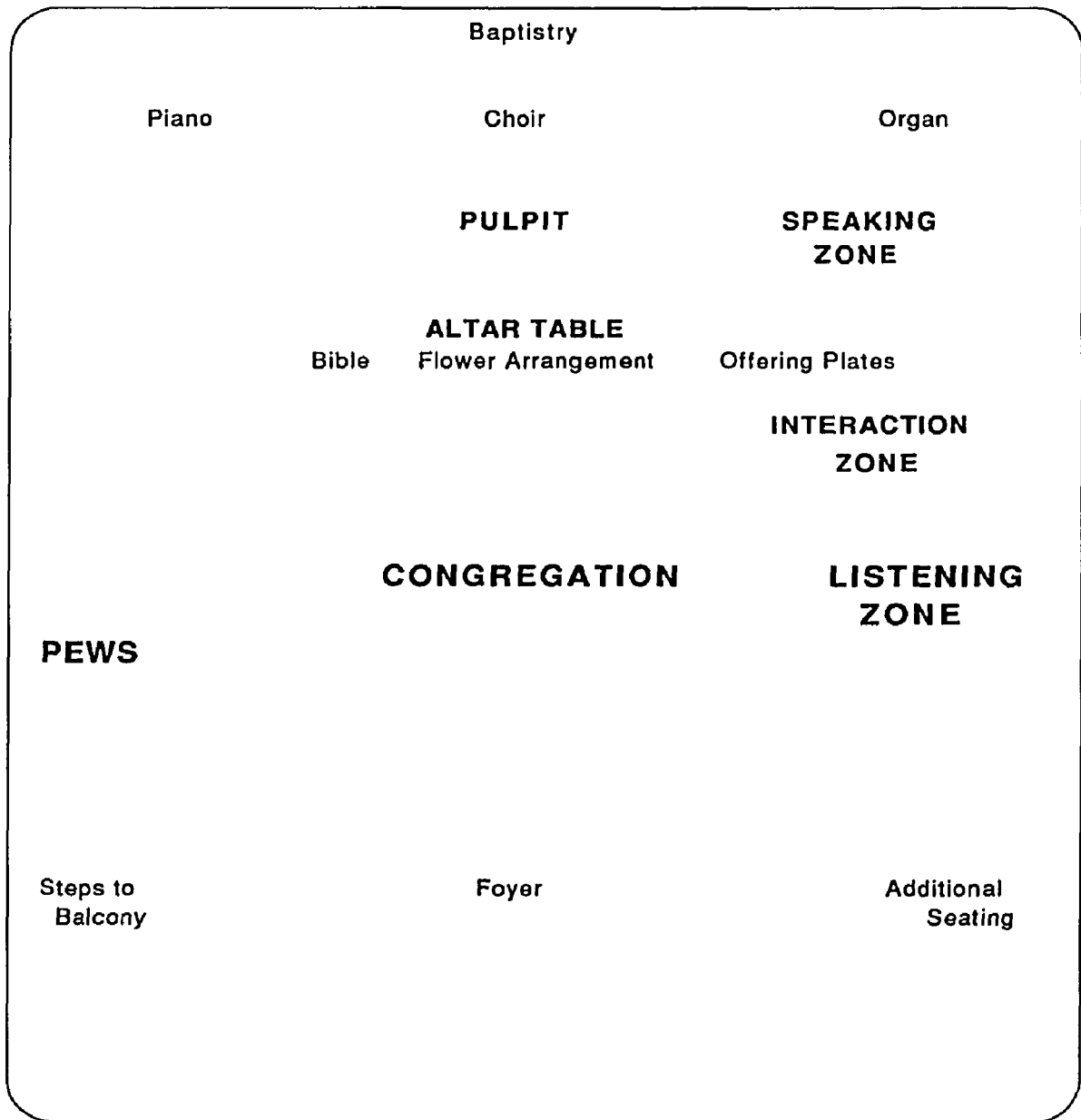


FIGURE 1: FLOORPLAN OF THE SANCTUARY

area, which can be called the “speaking zone,” since most, if not all the speaking is produced here, is actually a stage that is elevated about three feet above the level of

the congregation. On this stage is located all the instruments used in the singing portion of the service, as well as the actual pulpit - a large lectern behind which the pastor speaks when he delivers the sermon. The term "pulpit" not only refers to this piece of sanctuary furniture, but is more important for its metaphoric usage describing the authority and weight given the pastor and his words when spoken in the sermon. Austin (1988) has noted that the pulpit in Southern Baptist churches serves as the centerpiece, both architecturally and metaphorically for the dramatized worship service event, of which the sermon is the climax. The pulpit can be seen as a mantle of authority such that when the pastor speaks "in the pulpit" or "from the pulpit" (whether actually behind it or off to the side of it, as pastors will often do in the delivery of the sermon) what he says is given the weight of biblical authority. It is somewhat equivalent to the Catholic concept of "ex cathedra."

This community places a great deal of importance on the word, both the written Word of God (the Bible) and the spoken words of the congregation to God and one another, as well as the supernaturally spoken words of God to man. Reflecting this is the prominence within the physical space of the sanctuary of copies of the Bible - some in the pews, a large one on the wooden altar table and, most recently, a large memorial Bible in a homemade glass case in the foyer. In addition to these, the pastor always carries his Bible with him to the pulpit and regularly consults it during the course of the sermon. Furthermore, members of the congregation are expected to bring their Bibles with them to the worship services where the pastor frequently exhorts them to join him in turning to scripture texts during the sermon. The prominence of the Bible as a primary artifact in this environment and the absence of any other icon or religious statues, suggests that the worship services of this

community are anchored around the written Word which is transformed in the sermon into an oral performance through which the pastor, the congregation and God cooperatively create experience.

The altar area is at the front of these sections of pews and runs the entire width of the building. The altar portion is on the floor, at the level of the congregation, and is marked only by a large wooden table in the center, engraved with the words "This Do In Remembrance of Me," and containing a weekly flower arrangement, usually given by a member of the congregation in memory of someone, a stack of offering collection plates and occasionally a large Bible. This altar area can be called the "interaction zone" where the speaker (God/pastor) and the hearer (congregation member) meet for in a direct encounter (e.g. conversion or rededicating one's life to God). This encounter can be mediated by the pastor (e.g. explaining the conversion procedure or praying with a distraught member about some personal problem) or unmediated, in which case an individual member might kneel and pray, silently and alone at the altar.

As previously noted (Chapter 1), the pulpit is a metaphor that signifies, at one level, the social distance between the speaker (pastor) and the audience (congregation), which is itself metaphoric of the perceived spiritual distance between God and man. In the theological tenets of this community, this spiritual distance can only be bridged by a mediator (Christ) who shares characteristics of both God and man. In the same way, the pastor assumes an almost messianic role within the community, functioning as both surrogate for God, with accompanying power and authority, as well as representative of the congregation. The social distance, represented at one extreme by a role that requires the exertion of authority and, at the

other , by one that requires the creation of solidarity, can be manipulated via various linguistic and kinesic strategies such that one pole or the other is marked in a manner that creates an overall balance between the two that the speaker wishes to emphasize. Different pastors will manipulate these roles in variable ways, giving more or less emphasis to each role, depending on the overall impression of self he wants to represent to the hearers.

2.2 Purpose of Sermon

In this community the speech event called the sermon is one around which the communal life of the group revolves. The congregation meets for what are called worship services on Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, and Wednesday nights. While the Wednesday night meetings often have shorter speech events which can be called sermons, the major sermon event takes place on Sunday morning and again on Sunday night. In this speech event, the pastor stands behind the pulpit and for thirty to forty-five minutes delivers a message that he and the community believe comes from God. The sermon serves a variety of purposes in this community. First of all, it is the primary forum for imparting and emphasizing doctrine and beliefs, i.e. a means of reciting and explaining the community's worldview. The members of the congregation also are involved in small group Bible studies led by "teachers" who are laymen, i.e., also non-pastoral members of the congregation. However, these events, while dealing with doctrinal/belief systems of the group, do not carry the authority and finality of the pastor's sermon (see Chapter Four). Even if an individual member of the congregation does not agree with the pastor's comments or interpretation of scripture, the authority and influence of the sermon still hold. Thus, because it is considered to

have its origin in God and because it carries great authority, it is considered a very sacred event and one that has a great deal of influence over people within the congregation. Furthermore, because of its sanctity, there are certain constraints on what is appropriate for content and behavior in and during the sermon event. These constraints are not formalized, but understood by the community and open to change. For example, detailed sexual references would be considered inappropriate as would excessively agitated physical behavior or loud screaming. One might hear the comment that a particular comment or behavior "is not appropriate in the pulpit." Furthermore, if the pastor makes a remark or emphasizes a point with which a member (or members) of the congregation do not agree, it is generally considered a bigger controversy than had the disputed remark been made by a "layperson" in a Bible study class. Again, this is precisely because the sermon and its content are perceived by the members to exercise a great deal of power over their lives.

In addition to the pedagogical function of the sermon, there is the administrative function, in which the sermon event is used to make important announcements related to the functioning of the community: deaths or illnesses of members, decisions by the deacons, new procedures to be followed, important upcoming events or cancellation of such, etc. When pastors or other staff members resign, it is usually done during this time. Thus, the sermon provides opportunity for smoother administration of the community through the transfer of important information.

2.3 Structure of the Sermon

Sermons by Southern Baptist preachers often follow stringent prescriptions learned in seminary preaching classes. Most Southern Baptist pastors who are

employed full-time by a church (in contrast to those who are bivocational, i.e. who are employed by the church part-time and depend on other sources of income as well) have been seminary trained, most often receiving a master of divinity (M.Div.) degree, normally taking three years to complete. Preachers will often follow a basic outline of three to five major points, preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion. Popular mechanisms used by preachers include poems, personal anecdotes (theirs or those of others), and various mnemonic devices such as beginning each major point with a rhyming word, or a word that begins with the same letter, alliteration etc.

The pastor in this community does not adhere to this strict approach in structuring his sermons, in that he does not obligatorily include the popular devices mentioned above. The basic structure of the sermons of this pastor is as follows: (1) announcements or general information, (2) body and (3) invitation, in which the pastor appeals to the congregation for some kind of physical response (typically movement to the altar area) to the message of the sermon.

2.4 The Sermon Event: Mediation of A Message and A Messenger

The sermon is unique among speech events in other groups because of the perception of the very real and active presence and participation of God in the event - both in the construction of meaning and the maintenance of social relationships. As the following extract shows, it is understood, in fact doctrinally dictated ("For where two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst...." Matthew 18:20) that God is not only present as audience, but also actively involved in "speaking." This extract is from that portion of the sermon called by the community "the invitation,"

which comes at the end of the sermon and in which the pastor (and implicitly God) personally and specifically invites the audience to respond in some way (usually publicly and physically) to what they have heard. It is usually during this time that the presence and voice of God is recognized and particularly called attention to:

Extract 1

"...Jesus said that where two or more would be in agreement with His word, they could have whatever they asked for. I'll agree with you, and you come and tell me what, what God's saying to you today.."

The sermon can best be described as a kind of verbal art called "cultural performance" (Bauman, 1977). Bauman describes cultural performances as "scheduled events, restricted in setting, clearly bounded, and widely public, involving the most highly formalized performance forms and accomplished performers of the community" (1977:28). In the sermon, the pastor presents himself as God's representative, a role both implied and explicitly stated, as in the following extract:

Extract 2

I want to tell you on the authority of God's Word, it's going to work out...."

In the sermon event, the pastor is the dominant or primary speaker (Bublitz 1988) and has the role of dramatizing a message through which the other participants are invited to infer meaning. He is in a sense the mediator of the message because he interacts with two participants - audience and God - both of whom are characterized in extremely opposite ways. God is perceived as sacred, perfect, supernatural, the congregation as secular, imperfect, human. Between the two stands the pastor - both human, like the congregation, and God-like because of his role as "shepherd" of the flock and his priestly function. Although this community believes in what is called the

“priesthood of the believer”, in which every man/woman is their own priest, or mediator, with God, the pastor nonetheless serves a function and holds a position that is, at least indirectly, perceived to be closer to God and thus, in some sense distinct from the social level of the congregation. As representative for God, the pastor has the responsibility to transmit God’s message to the congregation such that they will in some way experience God, undergo some kind of transformation and, subsequently, respond with some kind of physical and public action, e.g. “going up front” or “down the aisle” to the altar. This could be perceived as a rather straightforward referential task, whereby information is linearly transmitted, if it were not for the fact that in addition to functioning as an authoritative representative of the sacred (God), the pastor is also a creature of the secular. Furthermore, not only is the sacred message-giver (God) represented by a secular message-bearer(pastor), but the sacred message itself is restricted by the limitations of a secular medium, human language.

Thus, the speaker is presented with a dilemma wherein something sacred must be mediated through secular means and yet retain its sacredness. Oral performance is available as a productive means by which this dilemma can be solved because it transforms the basic referential or literal use of language into an interpretive frame (Bauman, 1977; Goffman, 1974) that invites hearers to interpret the message in a different way. By setting a stage and assuming a role, the speaker crafts a dramatized performance that invites the audience to join in the interpretation of its message. It has been argued (Burke, 1969) that the basically ritualized nature of a performance like the sermon solicits the participation of the audience through the creation of “an attitude of collaborative expectancy . . . Once you grasp the trend of the form, it invites participation” (1969:58). The participation of audience with the speaker sets up

a dyadic context in which meaning is co-created. It is not simply a matter of the speaker delivering a message, but rather a matter of an audience, actively responding to an invitation to participate, making inferences in their roles as active hearers in cooperation with the speaker (Bublitz, 1988).

Thus, the sermon event, while dominated exclusively by a single speaker, is nonetheless a situation in which speaker and hearer construct social reality (i.e. the message of the sermon) via oral performance. In this way, the sermon performance has an emergent quality that “resides in the interplay between communicative resources, individual competence, and the goals of the participants, within the context of particular situations” (Bauman 1977:38). Despite the fact that the sermon is basically an event with some measure of ritualized structure and institutionalized status, it retains a great degree of flexibility that allows the speaker, within the parameters of the basic structure, to manipulate creatively the relevant factors in order to fashion a text that falls somewhere between something completely spontaneous and unstructured at one pole, and something fixed and rigidly structured at the other.

The result of a successful performance, that is to say a successful attempt to construct social reality, is the enhancement of experience (Bauman 1977).

It is part of the essence of performance that it offers to the participants a special enhancement of experience, bringing with it a heightened intensity of communicative interaction which binds the audience to the performer in a way that is specific to performance as a mode of communication. Through his performance, the performer elicits the participative attention and energy of his audience, and to the extent that they value his performance, they will allow themselves to be caught up in it. When this happens, the performer gains a measure of prestige and control over the audience - prestige because of the demonstrated competence he has displayed, control because the determination of the flow of the interaction is in his hands (1977:43 - 44).

The objective, then, is the augmentation of the shared experience and knowledge of the community but, in addition to that, the provision of opportunity for individuals to augment and enhance their relationship with God. In fact, at the end of sermons, the pastor "gives an invitation," which, among other things, provides - or compels - the audience to not only attend to and interpret meaning from a dramatic presentation, but to verbally and kinesically participate in a drama by entering onto a stage that has been laid out by the pastor. A stage is set, dialogue is provided or suggested and the audience is asked to assume the role of receivers of truth and respondents to that truth through individual, physical, public action in some way so as to effect a new experience with God, either through a conversion (for unbelievers) or a "rededication of one's life" or some other encounter (for the believer who has erred or "backslidden").

While the global objective of the sermon performance is the creation of shared experience, the more immediate goals for the event are basically two-fold. First of all, the speaker must clearly present a message of some sort from God to the congregation and, secondly, this message comes through a messenger who is also concerned with the presentation of his self and the perception of that self by his hearers. This presentation of self consists of two further distinctions, one of which is concerned with the mediation by the speaker between the two roles he is obliged to play by virtue of his status as God's representative. The other concerns his need to demonstrate competence as a preacher:

This competence rests on the knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate ways. Performance involves on the part of the performer an assumption of accountability to an audience for the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content. From the point of view of the audience, the act of expression on the part of the performer is thus marked as subject to

evaluation for the way it is done, for the relative skill and effectiveness of the performer's display of competence" (Bauman, 1977:11).

Members of the community attend to this evaluation of competence quite closely and expect their preachers to demonstrate a better than average performance competence. Regularly, members of the congregation will comment among themselves after a performance concerning the quality of that performance, evaluating sermons they perceive to be particularly effective as "powerful" or "anointed."

In the following analysis, I will exemplify and discuss some of the various linguistic devices that can be interpreted as marking attempts by the speaker to adequately present self via mediation between his dual roles of sacred representative and secular participant, and his efforts at demonstrating his performance competence.

2.5 Mediating Dual Roles: Pronoun Choice

As previously noted, the speaker in the sermon occupies a dual role which creates a tension that pressures him to mediate between two poles, one in which he exerts authority and power over the congregation as the official representative of God, and the other in which he attempts to experience solidarity with the congregation as one of their number on an equal social and spiritual footing with them. As pastor, he speaks for God, delivering God's message; as congregation member he receives the divine message along with his fellows. The speaker is under no formal rules as to how he manages this dynamic tension, but has the freedom to manipulate these roles throughout the event, based on his assessment of his presentation of self and his perceptions as to its reception by the hearers (congregation). The general expectation is that the speaker will strike a middle ground and fulfill the role of spiritual authority

for the dispersion of God's message, but at the same time give the impression that he is not claiming deity, but remains someone who is equal to his fellow members.

One of the linguistic devices the speaker uses to mark his mediation between the polar roles is the choice of pronouns. Drawing upon Comrie's (1976) speaker-addressee axis, it can be noted that the speaker oscillates between the choice of first person singular "I" (or "me") and the first person plural "we" form in the mediation of his polar roles (While I am arguing that this speaker chooses this form to express solidarity, it is worth mentioning that other communities can use this form as an expression of power and as an attempt to condescend, as, for example, when a representative of the medical community says to a patient, "Have we taking our medicine today?"). It can be further argued the use of "I/me" is assertive of self, marks distance between the speaker and hearer and calls upon an authoritarian assumption, whereas the inclusive form "we" is an appeal to solidarity with the addressees, marks a reduction of distance and calls upon a cooperative assumption (Brown & Levinson, 1987:127). In figure 1, this vertical authority/solidarity dichotomy is graphically displayed, with the AUTHORITY pole represented by GOD and the SOLIDARITY pole marked by CONGREGATION. When speaker wishes to cast himself in the role of authority and mark himself as GIVER of a message from God to the congregation, he uses the pronoun form "I", whereas his decision to cast himself in the role of RECEIVER (along with the congregation) of a message from God is marked by the use of the pronoun form "we." Therefore, it follows that the speaker, cognizant of the need to effect an adequate presentation of self such that this self will be positively received by the congregation, chooses the particular pronoun

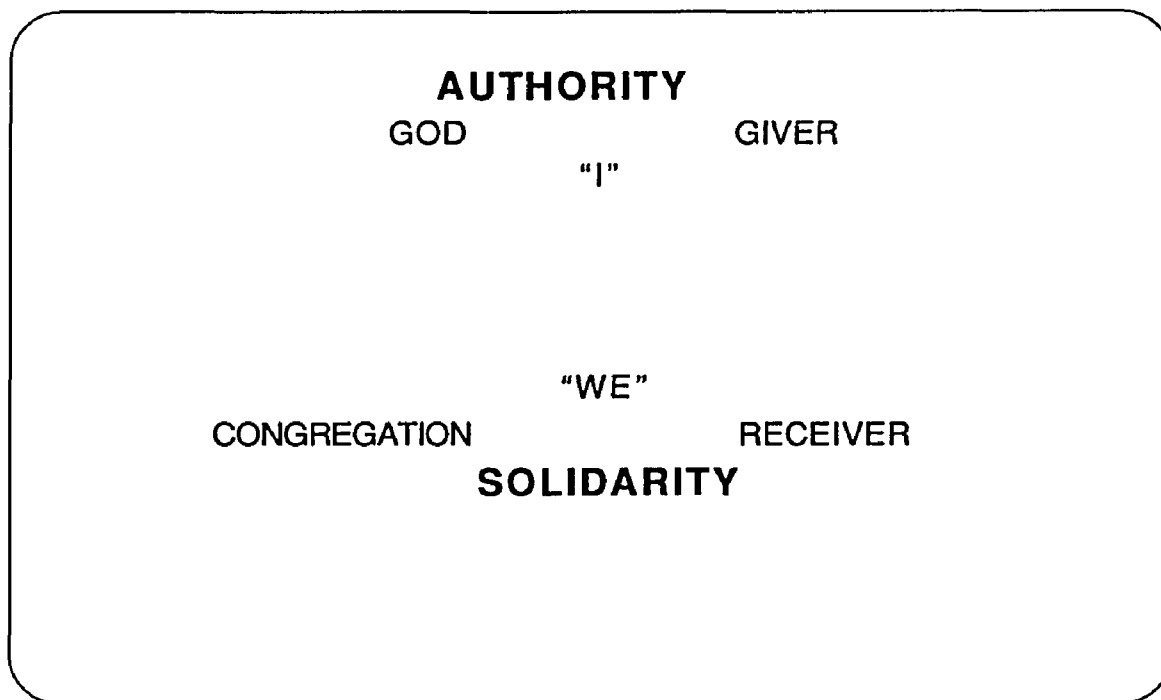


FIGURE 2: AUTHORITY/SOLIDARITY DIMENSION

form to prevent any damage to face that he perceives might accrue should his presentation of self be negatively evaluated by the congregation.

When the speaker wants to signal the hearer to interpret his contribution as asserting his spiritual authority and marking distance between him and the congregation, he will choose the "I/me" pronoun, as in the following examples.

Extract 3

Now, I want to talk to you this morning about, uh, a question, and that's:
Whose word you gonna take? Whose word are you gonna take?

Extract 4

Now I want everyone of you right now just to say that - you don't have to say it, uh, shoutingly, but just, just say it. Uh, "Lord be it unto me according to Thy word."

When the speaker desires to signal the hearer to interpret his contribution as creating solidarity, emphasizing his role as a receiver of God's message along with the congregation and reducing distance between them, the speaker will choose the "we" form. This appears to be done when the speaker is either making comments that could be taken as critical of the congregation, in which case the operating procedure for the speaker is to include himself in the target of criticism (Extract 5) , or when he is making a positive statement that generally applies to all participants (Extract 6).

Extract 5

- a. "One of our problems is that we just know too much."**
- b. "We're terribly uncomfortable with, uh, with really believing the Word of God, and so we just stay in a state of miserableness."**
- c. "Many times we use a negative word and we, uh, we curse people."**

Extract 6

- a. "In the name of Jesus we have the victory."**
- b. "But, we're going to learn the truth tonight and we're gonna - when we know the truth, and we're gonna be able to set - to be set free."**
- c. Now when we speak that word in agreement with God, we're born again."**

It is important to note that the oscillation between these pronoun choices does not occur after long units of discourse. Rather, the norm is for the speaker to shift between the two choices, including both “I/me” and “we” forms within phrases, sentences, as well as across longer units of discourse. It is not a matter of a speaker speaking at great length in an exclusively power-asserting manner and subsequently, upon some recognition of his being negatively evaluated as too authoritative by the audience, shifting to a manner that is marked by pronouns that emphasize solidarity. Rather, the speaker accesses both pronoun forms and weaves them into his discourse to give an overall impression, from his perspective, of balance between his two roles, as exemplified in the following extract.

Extract 7

Now I want to read two or three verses of Scripture before we come to the text, because I think it's important that we do this in order for us to know what God says about His word.

In extract 7, the speaker shifts back and forth between “I” and “we” in a way that highlights very clearly the duality of his role as both representative of God’s authority and bearer of his message (“I want to read..” and “I think it’s important”) and receiver of the message as well (“before we come to the text” and “for us to know about God’s Word.”).

In extract 8, the speaker as receiver switches to his role as spiritual authority (“I guess I need to draw it for you”), marked by a shift in pronouns:

Extract 8

We get to the point where we believe what God tells us in His word? Well, the first thing we’ve got to do, we’ve got to put a big question mark - I guess I

need to draw it for you like this [makes motion in the air simulating a question mark]. A big question mark over everything of the beliefs of the world system. One of our problems is that we just know too much.

Finally, in extract 9, the speaker notes that in his role of message-giver he will present a message to the message-receivers (“I want to finish, uh, a message we began about, uh, three weeks ago”) of whom he is a member.

Extract 9

I want you to turn now to John, chapter one. I want to finish, uh, a message that we began about, uh, three weeks ago. And then, uh, last Sunday we returned to it and, uh, today we'll try to finish, which has to do with the Word of God.

It is not always the case that the speaker will shift from the “I” form to the “we” form in an effort to emphasize solidarity. Much depends on the speaker’s evaluation of the congregation’s perception of his presented self, in which case he is motivated by considerations of solidarity, as opposed to the speaker’s evaluations of the importance of the message itself, in which case he may be motivated by concern for the fulfillment of his authoritarian role. In cases where his evaluation is that the message is primary over considerations of solidarity and personal face, he will choose the authority-motivated “I/me” pronoun form, as in extract 10.

Extract 10

We were singing awhile ago, “Victory in Jesus.” But we don’t really look like that a lot. Let me ask you just a simple question: Do you think anybody’s going to follow you to Jesus, looking the way you look? Hmmm? Do you

think somebody'll want to get in line behind you and follow you to Jesus by looking the way you look? Some of you, I'm telling you, it, it breaks my heart when I stand up here and speak to you, because you've got such mean looks on your face sometimes when we talk about God's word - you never smile. Now some of you are smiling now, I praise God. But some of you have not broken a smile yet across your face.

In this extract, the speaker begins by marking his solidarity with the congregation and his role as a receiver of the message, specifically that those who profess "victory in Jesus" should have facial expressions that illustrate that (i.e. smiles or something similar). He subsequently shifts into his role as spiritual authority, (marked by a shift to the "I/me" separate from the addressee's "you") thus marking distance between himself and the congregation, allowing him to be more direct in his assertions. Note that the speaker is not including himself among the group who don't smile.

Apparently, the speaker perceives that this particular message is important enough that it needs to be delivered very directly and with the full weight of authority that his role as God's representative brings with it.

One further option available to the speaker can be accessed when the speaker wants to be specifically and unusually critical, but wants to do so indirectly in such a way that the hearers are left to make the inference. In such a case, the speaker has the option of shifting away from either the "we" or "I/me" forms and to the use of the third person, plural "they/them" form, as in extract 11.

Extract 11

Some people are like talking to a wall, and until they decide to accept the Word of God, there's nothing that anybody can do for them.

In this example, it can be argued that the speaker opts for the “they/them” form as an attempt to signal the hearer to not interpret the contribution as either an indication of the authoritarian role nor as an overt attempt at maintaining solidarity. The use of the phrase “some people” is referentially ambiguous, but could be taken to include the hearers. However, rather than a direct assertion of this, the speaker sets up a scenario in which those among the hearers who won’t “accept the Word of God” are cast somewhere outside the group (“them”) on this point and the hearers (congregation) are being invited to actively participate in the inference of meaning such that if this criticism does in fact accrue to any one of them, it is not the work of the pastor but through the hearers’ own interpretation. Use of third person forms allows referential distance to be created and hence critical predicates in extract 11 can be interpreted as applying to outsiders whose beliefs are not similar to those of “me” or “you” or “us” in this domain. In cases like this, the speaker can be said to mark an inclusive/exclusive perspective along a horizontal polar axis, with the CONGREGATION, marked by the pronoun forms “we/us” at one end and OUTSIDERS, marked by the pronoun forms “they/them” at the other, as represented in figure 2. As previously mentioned, the scenario created in extract 11 can be said to provide a place somewhere outside, but near, the point marked by “we” for hearers to place themselves if they perceive the criticism to apply to them. While outsiders would be an easy target, the pastor is typically more concerned with mediating between the two vertical, internal roles of authority and solidarity, with the general expectation that the speaker will attempt to strike a middle ground by manipulating the linguistic resources that can be interpreted as marking emphasis on one or the other of these roles.

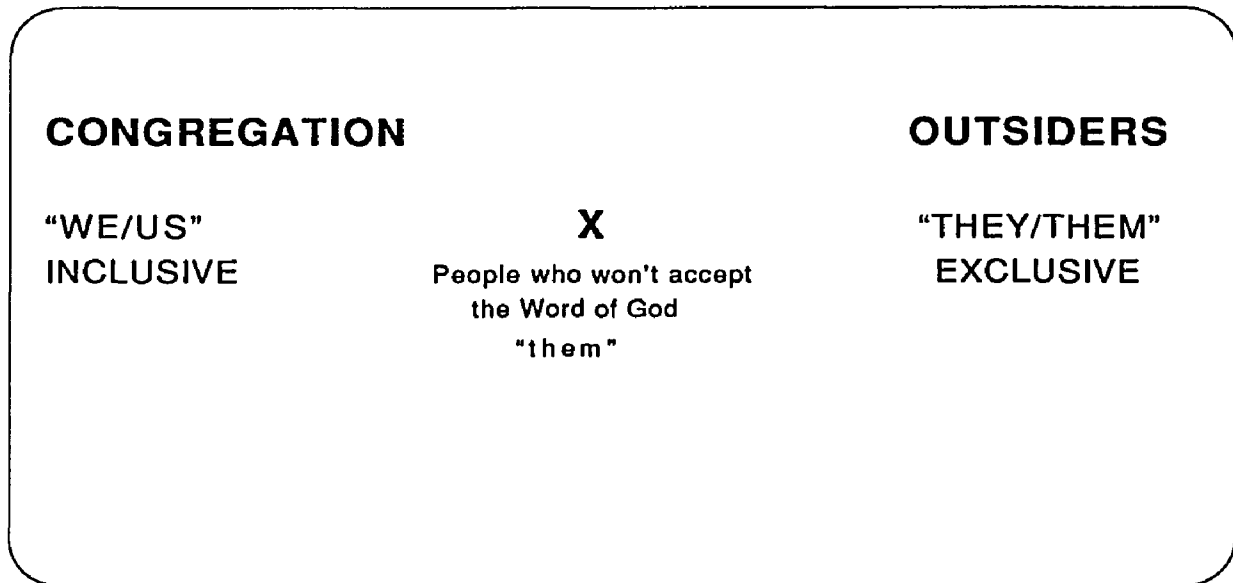


FIGURE 3: INCLUSIVE/EXCLUSIVE DIMENSION

2.6 Mediating Dual Roles: Imperative Verb Forms

There are two basic transactional functions (cf. Brown & Yule, 1983) associated with the sermon: giving information and giving instructions. Giving information includes making announcements, giving explanation of scripture, giving assessment of a problem, giving general information as to a solution to the problem, anecdotes, etc. Giving information is directed at the congregation but does not directly seek to influence their behavior and elicit some specific response - they are expected to primarily receive the information and process it. Giving instructions, or commands, on the other hand, though also directed at the congregation, differs in that it does presume a specific behavior to result from the receiving of the instructions. Both the giving of information and the giving of instructions are speech acts consistent with an authoritarian role and assume some degree of subservience on the part of the listener

i.e. the felicity conditions for these activities require that the recipients can be reasonably assumed not to know the information given and that they are able to carry out the instructions and are in the appropriate role to receive instructions. In the exercise of these two basic transactions, the speaker once again mediates between the two poles of authority exertion and solidarity experience, choosing from a variety of speech acts with which to mark the balance he is trying to achieve. As with the choice of pronoun, there are no clear rules that determine what is an appropriate balance; rather, the speaker may choose as he will and in so doing create his own particular preaching style, based on his personal evaluation of the event and whether or not his roles are being adequately harmonized. Within the larger network of Southern Baptist church communities, preaching styles, reflective of the balance of the two roles, vary along a continuum with preachers at one end who emphasize a strong, authoritarian role, marked by a proliferation of corresponding linguistic devices (e.g. "I/me" pronouns and direct imperative verb forms), and those at the other end whose emphasis is on solidarity and whose discourse is marked accordingly. In addition to the linguistic markers already noted, the speech of the more authoritarian types is normally further marked by an increased use of paralinguistic features (such as louder volume and rhythmic cadence-like stress patterns), as well as more agitated gesticulations and body movements. Conversely, those who are focused more on solidarity have speech styles marked by a dearth of the paralinguistic and kinesic features typical of the other, can be characterized instead as something more like a fireside chat.

Rather than discussing the act of giving information, I will focus exclusively on the speaker's various manipulations of the imperative (command) form of the verb as

indicative of his attempt at role balancing. As previously noted, the speaker has several options in giving a command of some kind to the congregation, the most obvious way being through a direct command, instantiated by a imperative form of the verb, as in the following examples.

Extract 12

- a. **“Read it in Psalm 24. . .”**
- b. **“Find a gap. If you can’t find one, I can give you two or three....”**
- c. **“And, uh, what God did, notice - verse one, one, Genesis...”**
- d. **“Well there are three words , three words to deal with that. First of all, in your life you’ve got to expose it. Expose it. That is, allow God to expose it. Allow God to expose, uh, lust and hate, or whatever it is. Let the Lord bring it to light and expose it. Get honest with yourself. Ask God to help you. sometimes you may need help from a friend, you may need help from a, a pastor or a counselor or something. But to, to help you expose and get honest about it. If you, if you can’t see it, ask somebody else, “Would you tell me what you see in my life,” you know. Let it be exposed. Secondly, after it’s been exposed then you need to oppose it. Oppose it. Come against it.”**

In extract 12.d the speaker uses a series of strong commands (e.g. “Get honest”, “Oppose it”) that can be interpreted as marking the speaker’s authoritarian role, although the passage is marked by other mechanisms that can be interpreted as hedges on the speaker’s commitment to the potential threat that could accrue as a result of such strong assertion of authority. These features include the use of the

hypothetical/conditional “if” and the use of constructed dialogue (to be discussed in more detail later).

In addition to the expression of a direct command, the speaker has a variety of options for focusing less on his authoritarian role and more on solidarity. It has been noted that the communicative intent of a speech act (such as a direct command) potentially threatens cooperative interaction.

For to ask someone to do something is to presuppose that they can and are willing to do it, and have not already done it; to promise to do something is to admit that one hasn't already done it, to assume that the addressee wants it done and would prefer you to do it - and so on. . . . consequently, to hedge these assumptions - that is, to avoid commitment to them - is a primary and fundamental method of disarming routine interactional threats (Brown & Levinson, 1983:146).

The lexical choice of “just” in extract 13 can be interpreted as a hedge on the speaker's commitment, but not necessarily on his commitment to the assumptions inherent in the proffering of a command. Rather, the hedge can be interpreted as against the speaker's commitment to the potential threat to cooperative interaction that might accrue as a result of the act. This hedged imperative (and the others like it subsequently discussed) can be said to function less like imperatives and more like exhortatives.

Extract 13

- a. “So just, just stand strong on that...”**
- b. “ Now just picture a house, just a moment....”**
- c. “Just always know that and never doubt it at all...”**

It can be argued that the speaker is no less committed to the assumptions of the act than he would be had he offered it directly, but rather is more sensitive to the potential risk that it will be received negatively by the congregation, reflecting poorly on the speaker and contributing to a breakdown in cooperation.

The speaker has another less direct option for giving a command, specifically the expression of his desire, via the use of the verb “want,” for an action to be accomplished by the hearers as in, extract 14.

Extract 14

- a. **"I want you to turn now to John, chapter one..."**
- b. **"Well I want you to open your Bibles..."**
- c. **"Now I want you to watch this...."**
- d. **"I want you to look at...."**

In each of these examples, the speaker could have chosen to be direct (rather than desiderative) and focus exclusively on his assertion of authority, e.g. (a) turn now, (b) open your Bibles, (c) watch this, and (d) look at. However, the expression of his desire softens the potential threat that a focus on authority may engender.

The speaker also employs an even less direct way of giving commands by his choice of the inclusive imperative form “Let’s”, which can be interpreted as an act of suggestion rather than command, although there is strong expectation that the suggestion should be followed. Part of what gives it suggestive force, as opposed to the more coercive force of a direct command, has to do with the nature of inclusivity. As with the use of the inclusive “we” pronoun form, the inclusive imperative (Let’s) emphasizes the speaker’s solidarity motivations and can be interpreted as meaning, “I suggest *we* jointly or cooperatively perform an action.” It can be argued that in this case the speaker is not so much emphasizing his role as a receiver, but accomplishing solidarity by inviting the hearer to participate in his role as spiritual authority. Thus, in extract 15a and b, the speaker invites the congregation to join with him to do activities

that he, as the authority figure, actually performs. Although only the pastor actually reads the text aloud, the audience is being invited to join him and read along (silently) where they sit. Furthermore, while the invitation is for everyone to pray, only the pastor utters the prayer, but the congregation joins in silently, but no less actively.

Extract 15

- a. “Let’s continue to read...”**
- b. “Let’s pray right now...”**
- c. “ Let’s look at the, the issue of trying to pull ‘em down....”**
- d. ‘Let’s take, uh, rejection for just a minute....”**
- e. “All right, let’s stand together now, and let’s let the power of the Holy spirit right now into our lives...”**

In 15c and d, the speaker again invites the congregation to join him in the role of spiritual authority and deal with particular topics (e.g. pulling down spiritual strongholds and rejection), an activity he might otherwise undertake alone through more direct means (e.g. “I am going to talk to you today about rejection.”). In 15e the speaker uses the inclusive “let’s” form to invite the audience to join him as receiver of God’s action by suggesting that they share in the physical activity of standing and the spiritual experience of receiving “the power of the Holy Spirit right now into our lives.” With these examples, we are alerted to not only the various mechanisms that allow for focusing on one speaker role over another, but also to the possibility of attempting solidarity by inviting the receivers to ascend to the level of the authoritarian role, rather than endeavoring to mark the speaker’s descent to the role of receiver.

As evidence for the flexible and creative nature of these mechanisms, the speaker frequently combines them in his performance. For example, in extract 16a, the speaker combines a direct command with the inclusive imperative (let's) form, and in 16b, the speaker combines an expression of desire(want) with the inclusive imperative (let's). These combinations can be interpreted as the speaker's attempt to signal the speaker that he is giving an added measure of emphasis on the creation of solidarity, an emphasis which is dependent upon the speaker's ongoing perceptions of the potential effect of his discourse.

Extract 16

- a. "Okay, let's sing now, please. You come..."**
- b. "Now I want you to target that and let's pray right now...."**

It must be emphasized that these choices are made variably and on the spot, as the speaker makes assessments of the effect of his role balancing on the congregation and their subsequent evaluation of the speaker's presentation of self. The result of this flexibility and spontaneity is the speaker's creation of a dramatized performance that attempts to invite the audience to participate, infer meaning and respond personally to the sacred reality under construction.

2.7 Constructed Dialogue

It has been argued that "...speakers do not come into possession of 'the floor' with their topic, they take the stage" (Yule & Mathis, 1990). As previously mentioned, the sermon event, which is a dramatization by the speaker through which meaning is constructed, provides clear evidence in support of such an argument. One of the most obvious ways that this dramatization takes place is through the speaker's use of what is termed "constructed dialogue." Constructed dialogue can be defined as

"... fragments of speech which have all the formal markings of direct, or quoted speech, but which were (in all likelihood) not actually uttered by the person(s) they are attributed to" (1990). Constructed dialogue is a term that has developed out of the concept of reported speech, but which, as Tannen (1989) points out, subsumes that concept. As previously noted in section 2.9 of Chapter 1, Tannen argues that much of what appears in discourse as reported speech becomes an element of the reporting context and, as such, it is a new creative activity. In agreement with Tannen's arguments, I will look at this data, not within the analytic framework of reported speech, but rather using the concept of constructed dialogue as the unit of analysis to describe what is taking place in the sermon event.

It has been suggested that constructed dialogue turns listeners into an interpreting audience (Tannen, 1989) and that this creates involvement, making the speech event what Brenneis calls "shared territory" (Brenneis, 1986). In other words, the construction of meaning (even in a speech event so single-speaker dominated as a sermon) is not the sole task of the speaker, but a joint, cooperative effort. In this speech event, in lieu of the choice to directly assert the message, thus emphasizing his authoritarian role, the pastor similarly and regularly chooses constructed dialogue to invite audience participation in the interpretation and construction of meaning, which can be interpreted as emphasizing the speaker's role as message receiver along with the audience, building solidarity between himself and the congregation. In this way, constructed dialogue functions like the first person plural "we" (section 2.5) and hedged imperatives (or exhortatives) (sec 2.6) signalling solidarity between speaker and hearers. Also, the use of constructed dialogue by the speaker can be interpreted as an attempt to mark distance between the speaker and his commitment to the

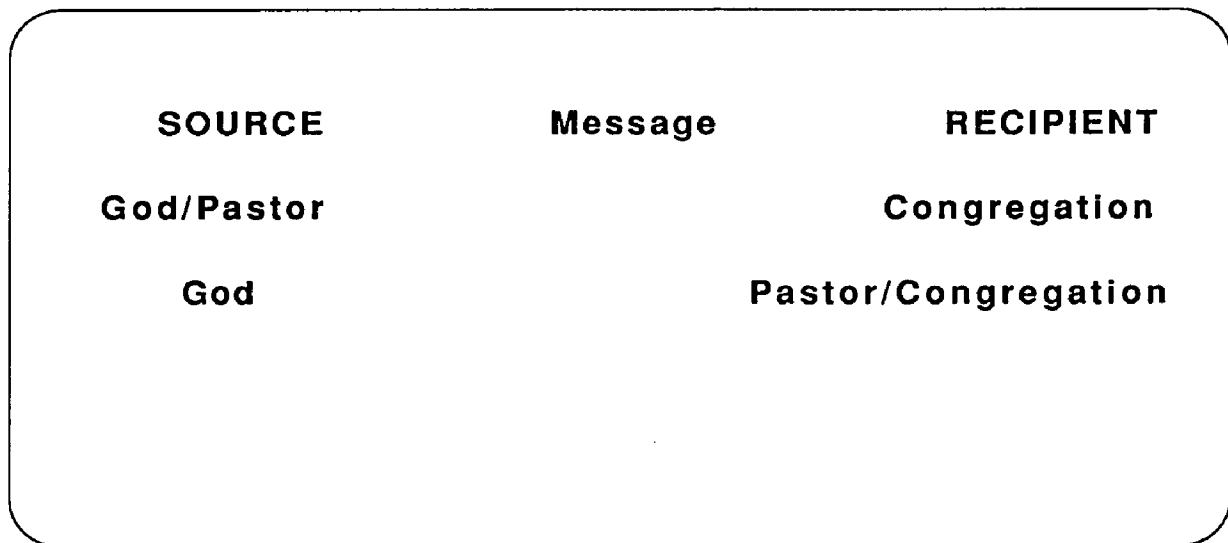


FIGURE 4: SOURCE/RECIPIENT DIMENSION

potential effect of his contribution on the hearers. In other words, a message may be perceived by the speaker to be of such a nature that in direct assertion it could conceivably create a situation in which the hearers negatively evaluate the speaker's presentation of self. In such a case, the speaker can opt for the constructed dialogue format to dramatize rather than assert the message. It should be emphasized that in this community, speech events (especially one of such an overtly sacred nature as the sermon) always include God as an active participant. In the sermon, God is thought to be present and "speaking," both through the pastor and directly through the inner thoughts of the individual members of the congregation. The basic dynamics of this speech event include a message, a source of that message (i.e. God) and a recipient (i.e. the congregation), as illustrated in figure 3. When the speaker marks his role as authoritarian, he aligns himself with the source of the message (God). Conversely, when he marks his solidarity with the congregation, he disassociates himself from the message source and cast himself instead as a recipient along with the congregation.

Constructed dialogue focuses particularly on the speaker as a recipient of a message that is conveyed through a dramatization. This extensive use of constructed dialogue is strong evidence for the argument proposed earlier that the sermon speech event is, in fact, a dramatization of meaning, rather than simply a transfer of information from speaker to listener.

Tannen (1989) gives a taxonomy of types of constructed dialogue in conversation, which is, by definition, a generally cooperative event in which meaning is negotiated and jointly constructed, in other words, "shared territory." However, in a speech event, such as a sermon, which is dominated by a single speaker, the use of constructed dialogue to create participation is even more crucial. In the data I have collected, the pastor frequently constructs dialogue, but does so in ways that do not easily fit Tannen's categories. Some of her proposed categories must be blended together in order to describe this data adequately. Furthermore, the constructed dialogue in this data is unique in at least three other ways. First of all, most of the speaker's dramatizations are not the re-creations of real, former events, but are instead creations of hypothetical ones. Secondly, the speaker frequently casts the audience and/or himself in these hypothetical events and the dialogue constructed is attributed to them. Thirdly, when the speaker does construct dialogue to re-create seemingly real, former events, the events he dramatizes are, for the most part, themselves dramatized re-creations of real events as represented in the Scriptures.

As previously noted, there are some examples of constructed dialogue that attempt to re-create actual , past-time events such as the following:

Extract 17

Mel Tari, one of our missionaries who was involved in that great revival in Indonesia several years ago, was, was asked a question, said, uh, "Why can't this kind of revival that happened over there take place here in the Bible belt? Where, where the word of God is so, uh, uh, saturated in the lives of people?" And he said, "Because you know too much."

In this extract, the speaker clearly marks that this is an actual, past event by use of a proper name (Mel Tari), past tense verb forms (was involved, was asked, said), and specific deictic expressions (ago, there, here). The speaker has presented here what looks like a direct quote, but as we have already noted (Tannen, 1989; Yule & Mathis, 1990), we will consider it not a direct quote, but dialogue constructed in an entirely new context, "...although its meaning resonates with association with its reported context" (Tannen, 1989:101). The following is another example of reporting an actual, past time event:

Extract 18

You know, I-I'm kind of like something I heard Jack Taylor say. He said for the first fifty years of his life he believed too little. And he said, "Now I may be guilty on the last fifty years - " and I'm going to agree with him too that, that I got fifty more - "and I may be guilty of believing too much, but I sho' had rather be guilty of believing too much than believing too little." I'm going to trust God and I'm going to listen to His Word and I'm going to, to believe it.

In this extract, the speaker once again marks this as a real past event by use of past tense verb forms (heard, said, believed) and reference to a specific referent (Jack

Taylor). The vague reference indicated by the word "something" is evidence that what the speaker has constructed is not the exact words of Jack Taylor, but rather an approximation of what he said and, more importantly, a dramatization of what was thought or felt and what is the key concept being emphasized by the current speaker, specifically that it is better to err to the side of believing God too much, rather than to the side of believing too little. In fact, it has been pointed out (Yule & Mathis, 1990) that frequently it is "...the dramatic expression of what was thought or felt rather than what was actually said that is presented." In the extract 18, the speaker re-creates a past event in which he was the main character and creates dialogue to dramatize his feelings of bewilderment during the particular event he describes.

Extract 19

But let me tell you something,: yesterday afternoon as I came home from Greenville, I got to Vicksburg probably about, uh, right at four o'clock. And I'm not sure the name of that high school - on one side of the road is a high school, on the other side of the road is a, an elementary school and just up from it is a junior, uh, well, an industrial technical school. Now is that, those of you who know that area, is that Warren Central, is that the name of that school? (someone verbally responds from the congregation) Warren Central, I thought it was. Well, when I got to the intersection where old highway 80 is running east and west and you cross it there on 27, uh, there were patrol cars there, people were everywhere, lights were, were on and they were directing traffic. And I said, "What in the world is going on?" And all I could see up ahead as I was looking, uh, south on 27, was cars just coming this way.

Notice that once again the speaker marks this by use of the past tense existential line ("there were") and by specific reference (e.g., "old highway 80," "on 27," and "that high school"). Notice in lines five and six the rare instance in which the pastor alters the nature of the speech event momentarily, transforming it into a dyadic conversation in which he requests (and gets) response from the congregation by interacting directly with them. This type of interactive moment may be seen as evidence for this pastor's attempt to create involvement by his audience in the dramatized events portrayed. His question, presented in the form of constructed dialogue, may also further involve the audience in his dramatized sense of bewilderment.

It should also be pointed out that in each of the extracts, the constructed dialogue is introduced by either "he said" or "I said," in each case the pronoun referring anaphorically to a specific previously identified referent. However, in extract 15, the identity of the questioner of Mel Tari is unknown - in fact, whether the questioner is singular or plural is also unknown. Therefore, the appropriate pronoun is not used and instead there is no overt person/subject so that the constructed dialogue attributed to this unknown entity is introduced simply by "said, uh." It is also important to note that in these cases and in those that follow, the deictic features of direct speech are preserved in the constructed dialogue such that "this, there and here" in excerpt 1, "I" in excerpt 2, and the present tense "is" in excerpt 3, can only be accurately interpreted, not in terms of speaker's current situation, but in the time and place of the alleged conversation.

In addition to these examples, constructed dialogue in this data can be categorized four ways: dialogue as instantiation, dialogue eliciting listener response,

dialogue as inner speech, and dialogue depicting a sequence of activities. These categories represent a blending together of some of Tannen's distinctions as well as the creation of some new ones.

2.8 Dialogue As Instantiation

Tannen describes dialogue as instantiation as dialogue that attempts to represent or illustrate a generally held and frequently occurring concept or idea, rather than a literal word for word statement (Tannen, 1989). It is the essential rather than the specific. In the hypothetical contexts created by the speaker in these sermons, instantiation predominates as a preferential method of dialogue construction, marked in various, yet regular ways. The speaker generally uses a variety of referential markings, all of which are plural: pronouns "we" and "you," as well as indefinite phrases such as "some people" and "some folks." In addition to these markers, the speaker also uses present tense and, in some cases, phrases which mark that the temporal aspect is durative rather than punctual, supporting the idea that the concept instantiated by the constructed dialogue is something that is general and frequently occurring, rather than specific and on only one occasion. In extract 20, the speaker's use of the plural pronouns "us" and "we" mark that the dialogue to follow represents something that cannot be attributed to anyone in particular, but to a general group. As previously mentioned (section 2.5), the use of the first person plural pronoun forms can also be interpreted as an attempt by the speaker to mark solidarity with the congregation. In this case, it can be said that the speaker counts himself as among those who share the kind of general concept instantiated by the constructed dialogue found in the extract. The vague future reference in "gonna" also indicates that the

following direct speech is not from a specific, reported incident, but rather some general type of incident that might occur at anytime. The phrase "we say" seems to include the idea that we "usually, or generally or frequently " say.

Extract 20

And you have to decide whose word you're gonna take. Many of us, we want to , a little of the both. We believe God, but we say, "Oh, I've got to be practical." And so we, we take a little bit of the world, and, and they don't mix. They make us miserable."

In extract 21, the speaker also uses present tense and indefinite temporal reference ("to the point") to introduce the constructed dialogue:

Extract 21

We've got to come to the point that we say, "God, everything you say and everything that Man says we're going to question. And if it doesn't line up with your word, then it's a lie, and it's come straight from Satan, straight from Hell."

In extract 22, the speaker uses the deictic marker "today" in a figurative sense to mean, not the day of the week of the current speaking event, but rather the current era or period of time, whose beginning and ending boundaries are not well-defined. This indefinite and generalized meaning of "today" helps to mark this as instantiation:

Extract 22

And you know what we think today? We think exactly the opposite. We think God's our servant. Now you think about that. We say, "God I want you to do this for me. God I want you to do this for me. God would you help me out

in this situation.” We act like God’s our servant. Which the opposite is really true. We’re to be servants of God.

In extract 23, the speaker visibly marks durative aspect (“are looking”) and, furthermore, uses the verb “to want” to indicate that what is being talked about is not specific words, but rather a feeling or desire.

Extract 23

And most of us, we, what we’re looking for, we’re looking for some big zap. I mean we want to get slain in the Spirit, we want to get knocked out, we want some big time zap to hit us. And more than that, we want it to be a once for all experience that that’s all, you know - “If I get hit one time with power, then I’ve got it and everything’ll be all right.” Well, I want to tell you that the power of God is AC current - it’s uh, it’s flowing all the time. It’s not like thunder and lightning that just falls and quits. It’s always available. It’s always coming. Stay plugged into it.

Notice that the constructed dialogue is introduced by the discourse particle “you know,” followed by a slight pause and subsequently the constructed dialogue, which is, incidently characterized by an increased volume and higher pitch. Furthermore, notice the use of “we” in the beginning portion of this segment of discourse, which can be interpreted as an attempt by the speaker to emphasize his solidarity with the congregation. However, in the constructed dialogue the speaker shifts to the “I” pronoun form which marks, not the speakers role, but the voice of a hypothetical character who is acting out the message. On the inclusive/exclusive continuum (originally illustrated in figure 2), this hypothetical character could be said to fall

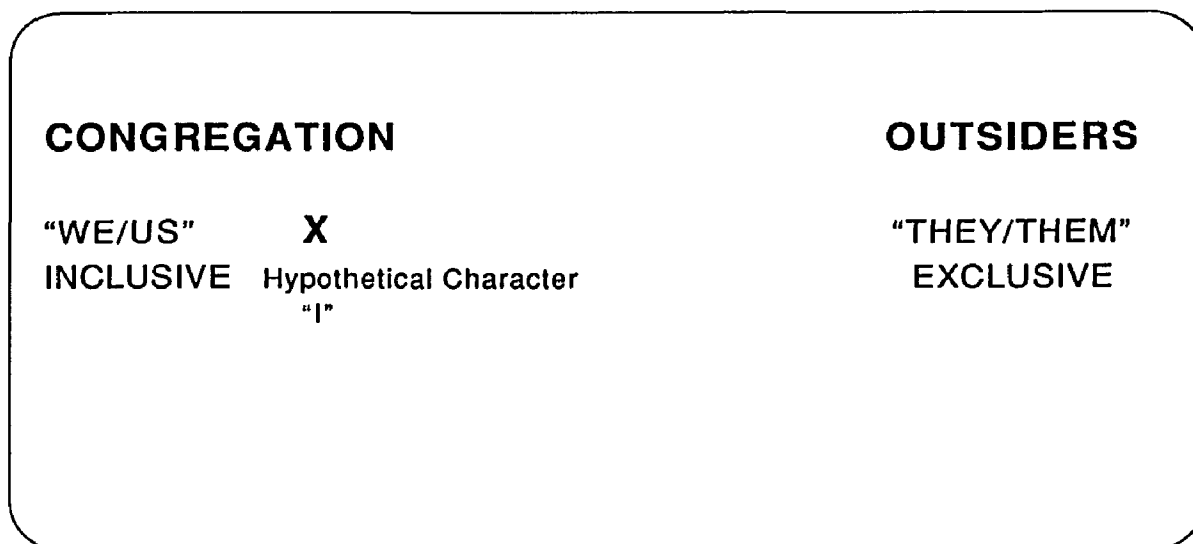


FIGURE 5: HYPOTHETICAL CHARACTER "I"

close to the inclusive pole, indicating that the character is representative of those in the congregation (see figure 5).

In extract 24, the speaker uses the phrase "every time" to mark an indefinite period of time rather than literally "each time words are uttered," which serves to emphasize the idea expressed by the speaker in this section that a person's general attitude is regulated or influenced by one's words. Again, it is a general idea or concept that is being instantiated and exemplified in the constructed dialogue with speech representative of the general concept the speaker is emphasizing.

Extract 24

Now it would be interesting if we could put a tape recorder around our necks, kinda like they put one of those monitors sometimes for, when they send you away from the hospital to, uh, wear on you for about twenty-four hours to check out certain vital signs and so forth. If we could just have a tape recorder that would just, uh, tape, be voice activated

every time we said something, it'd kick in and it would record it. Uh, and, uh, I think that, uh, that we would be amazed when we would play it back to see how much negativism has come out of our mouths. And that to know that our life is regulated by what we say. (pause) "I tell you what, I'm just so tired." (pause) "I am so hungry I am about to starve to death." (pause) "I'm so mad I could die." (pause) You ever think about those kind of words? They begin to influence and they regulate you.

Notice that the constructed dialogue is introduced with a dramatic pause, which can be interpreted as signaling to the hearers that a dramatization is upcoming. This dramatization is an example of what Tannen (1989:121) calls "...voices realized in a paralinguistically distinct acoustic representation: literally, a different voice." In keeping with the dramatization going on with constructed dialogue, the speaker not only constructs the dialogue, but also, like an actor, assumes the role and delivers the lines, using paralinguistic features to create a character who takes on life and breath. This "paralinguistically distinct acoustic representation" is marked by such things as increased volume, greater stress at the word and syllable level, changes in pronunciation and manipulation of voice tone. This "other voice" feature is perhaps the most salient marking of constructed dialogue for the listener of the sermon, but is lost on the reader of the transcripts. In this case, the three lines of constructed dialogue can be said to give the impression that the speaker is presenting three different characters in an ensemble performance, since the voices attributed to each line are somewhat different and the structure of each line follows a parallel form ("I am ____."). Thus, the contraposition of the lines and the different voices given them can give the impression of constructed dialogue that represents, not a single soliloquy, but

multiple characters portrayed by a single actor. This is evidence to support the idea that a sermon is a performance, with features associated with dramatic performances designed to have an effect of involvement on the part of the listener.

Instantiation can also be marked by use of indefinite reference as exemplified in extract 25, where the speaker marks the generality of the dialogue by use of the phrase "a lot of people," which indicates an indefinite and non-specific group who share the opinion expressed in the dialogue:

Extract 25

“ You know a lot of people say, “Yeah, Word of God it makes me feel good, I feel better after having read it and so forth. It’s, it’s comforting, it’s, uh, it’s encouraging. Its, uh, it’s inspiring.” But listen, that’s not what we’re saying. We’re saying here on the basis of this verse that every word of God has power.

In extract 26, the speaker uses the phrase "some people" and the phrase "I hear it quite often" to again mark the generality of the concept dramatized through dialogue:

Extract 26

So some people will tell you, you know, and I hear it quite often, uh: "I've gone to church for forty years or more and I've never heard some of this stuff." Well, don't blame me. Right now - you can blame me for a lot of things in the past 'cause I didn't hear it either. But, it's here in God's Word. It means that we need to open it and we need to read and now that we can have an opportunity to understand it.

In the following example, the speaker uses the indefinite referring expression "somebody" to represent a hypothetical member of a larger, general group, rather than a specific person.

Extract 27

And then think about what the Scripture says. Now that's stupid, isn't it? That's stupid for somebody to make statements like 'at. Tell God: "God you can't do anything for me, I'm just a problem, I'm in a mess, and uh,uh, and, and I can't be helped." Well let me tell you what. God forgives sin, but stupidity - I mean.

The phrases "a lot of people" (extract 25), "some people" (extract 26) and "somebody" (extract 27) can all be placed somewhere along the inclusive/exclusive continuum, their ambiguity indicating the speaker's attempts to emphasize the generality of the concepts instantiated in the constructed dialogue by these hypothetical speakers (see Figure 6).

Thus we have seen that the speaker in these sermons frequently uses constructed dialogue to instantiate , not a specific quote attributable to a specific person at a specific point in time, but rather a generally held and frequently occurring concept or idea.

2.9 Dialogue Eliciting Listener Response

In this type of constructed dialogue, the speaker again creates a hypothetical context and constructs dialogue this time to elicit some kind of response from the audience. In these cases, the speaker uses the 2nd person address form "you" along

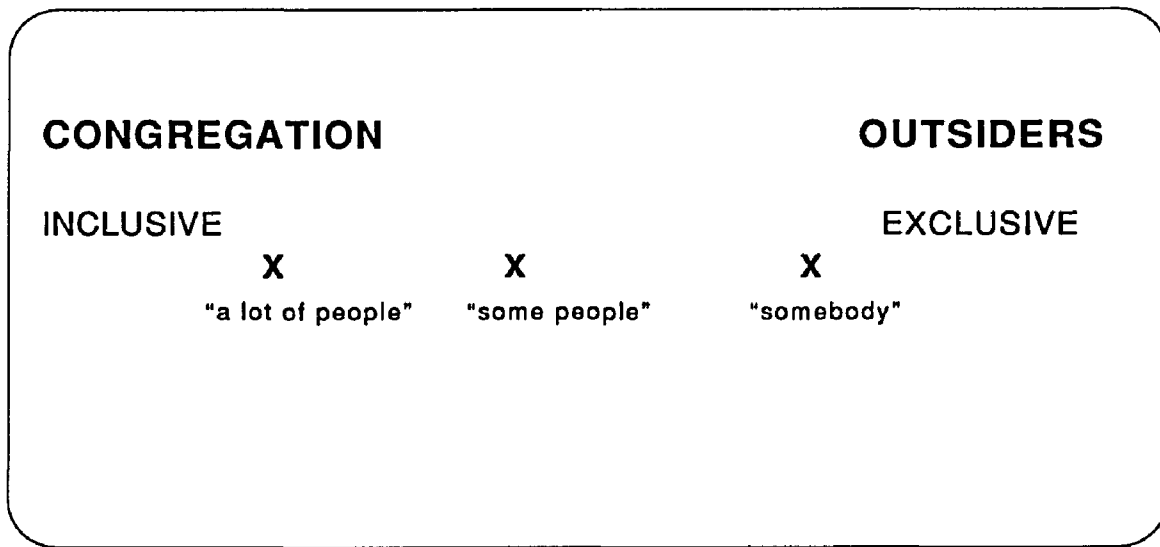


FIGURE 6 - VARIOUS HYPOTHETICAL CHARACTERS

with imperative verb forms. This is not one of the categories proposed by Tannen (1989) as a type of constructed dialogue used in conversation. Because of the fact that the sermon is a single-speaker dominated format with the audience much less engaged in verbally constructing the event (but actively involved, nonetheless, by from the speaker to infer meaning), this type of constructed dialogue will understandably be more prevalent in sermon discourse. However, it is not inconceivable that less formal conversations can also feature this type of constructed dialogue, as when, for example, one participant might be giving advice or directions to the other and might construct dialogue to give an example of what could be said, introduced by phrases like: "Look, all you have to say is:" or "It's easy, just tell them:" etc. As in other constructed dialogue, the deictic features of direct speech are preserved. In the following extract the speaker gives a series of imperative commands to the audience to set the stage for the dramatization of the point through constructed dialogue. The extensive and repetitive structure of this basic point the speaker wishes to emphasize is further

evidence for the almost literary style of the presentation. The constructed dialogue reinforces the point being made by providing the listener with an example of what might be said in order to satisfy the imperative being made. The expectation is that the hearers will respond in some way (at some future point in time) in a manner consistent with the example expressed in the constructed dialogue.

Extract 28

Get honest with yourself. Ask God to help you. Sometimes you may need help from a friend, you may need help from a pastor or a counselor or something. But to, to help you expose and get honest about it. If you, if you can't see it, ask somebody else: "Would you tell me what you see in my life?," you know. Let it be exposed.

In the next extract, the speaker again uses an imperative verb form ("Come against it.") to command the hearers to perform an action. The use of constructed dialogue, introduced by another imperative ("say"), exemplifies the kind of hypothetical statement that would satisfy the imperative being made.

Extract 29

Come against it. Uh, simply say: "Well, I'm not going to tolerate that anymore. I'm not going to allow that to be in my life anymore. I'm going to oppose it with the truth. I'm going to learn the truth and I'm going to use the truth to , to oppose it."

In the final example (extract 30) of this kind of constructed dialogue, the speaker does not overtly use the imperative form, but instead questions the ability of the speaker to do something with the phrase "Can you." The phrase is used in a layering sequence (to be discussed in a later section of this chapter), the repetitive nature of

which sets the stage for the dramatization by means of constructed dialogue. Once again, the dialogue serves to give an example of the kind of statement that would be deemed appropriate for the request to be satisfied, specifically that the hearers demonstrate their agreement with God by means of some kind of verbal response. Notice also the speaker's use of the phrase "over and over again" to indicate the iterative aspect of the proposed saying.

Extract 30

And we need to say that over and over again. That every word from God has power. Now, can you agree and say "Yes God, I believe that. I believe that every word that comes from you has power. I believe that it's more than just encouragement, it's more than just inspiration. "

2.10 Dialogue As Inner Speech

Tannen(1989:114) proposes that "... it is unquestionable that when a speaker reports what someone else thought, the words thus animated in dialogue do not correspond to words actually thought by the other person." She goes on to conclude that "...presenting the thoughts of a character other than oneself is a clear example of dialogue that must be seen as constructed, not reported." Constructed dialogue as inner speech, then, is dialogue that attempts to re-create the general idea of what a person or persons thought in a particular context. In the data currently under discussion, the speaker creates contexts that are hypothetical and not anchored at any particular point in time. In extract 31, the speaker uses reflexive terms (himself, yourself) to indicate that this is inner speech (or thoughts), and not something spoken to another interlocutor and the indefinite referring expression "somebody" to set the

stage for a hypothetical context, so that the speaker does not intend to identify any particular person, but a token of a more general type, with representative thoughts.

Extract 31

Depose the thought system. Tell yourself you are God's, uh, - listen, whatta you think about this: somebody telling himself this: "Well, you know, I just can't, I'm just in such a terrible mess. I can't do anything. I'm God's problem child and nobody really loves me, nobody cares anything about me." (pause) What do you think about that?

In extract 32, the speaker does not overtly mark the discourse with a reflexive, but the reflexivity of the speech is implied in the phrase, "You're asking the question."

Because of the nature of the sermon speech event, in which the norm prescribes no turn-taking nor any speech address to the speaker from the congregation, the implication here is that the question is being asked of one-self, i.e. as inner speech, or thoughts. The rhetorical device being used, attributing direct speech questions to the participants and a response to the pastor, does create an interactive effect and hence greater involvement of the audience.

Extract 32

Are you hurting this morning? Physically hurting? Emotionally hurting? You're asking the question, "Is it going to work out? Is it going to work out for me?" I want to tell you on the authority of God's word, it's going to work out.

In extract 33, the speaker constructs dialogue to represent his own thoughts. However, there is no indication that this fact alters the idea expressed by Tannen that

such dialogue does not "...correspond to words actually thought..." by the speaker. We have every reason to assume that the dialogue the speaker constructs is not intended by him to represent actual "mental words," but rather a dramatic illustration of what the speaker generally thought or felt. The speaker marks this in one way with the phrases "I've had a hard time coming to a realization" and "kept thinking". The use of progressive aspect indicates that these thoughts are part of a process and quite likely did not occur on one specific occasion but were reiterated over a period of time.

Extract 33

Now, I-I've had a hard time coming to a realization of that, because I kept thinking: "Well maybe some way of 'nother, God'll zap 'em and they'll turn around." Well God's drawing 'em by His Spirit all the time, but they have built up a system that they are rejecting it, there's a wall, they're not going to accept nor believe.

Thus we see in constructed dialogue as inner speech, more clear evidence for the idea that such dialogue is indeed a creative performance attempting to dramatize a general idea, feeling, or emotion, and not simply reported speech.

2.11 Dialogue Creating A Sequence of Events

There is one example (extract 34) in the data of the speaker creating a hypothetical context and using dialogue to actually recount a sequence of speech events. He marks the discourse as hypothetical with the word "suppose," and subsequently sets the stage for the mini-drama exemplified through constructed dialogue. The staging is necessary in order to understand the sequence of events represented in the subsequent constructed dialogue, and this staging section of the

discourse is marked by past tense, a marking previously reported as characteristic of this type of staging of actual physical events (Yule & Mathis, 1990). When the speaker has sufficiently set the stage, he uses a transition marker ("and then") and also shifts to the present tense ("he comes", "he says") to introduce the dialogue. The speaker also uses the modal construction "I'd" to mark that the event being created through dialogue is hypothetical, making a distinction between realis and irrealis, or hypothetical and factual. Additionally, the speaker uses the deictic term "tonight" (and not the narrative form "that night") to further mark the shift in temporal perspective concerning the events he is about to dramatize through dialogue.

Extract 34

Suppose that, uh, that I gave, uh, uh Dickie this, this pen to use to take some notes with and, uh, Dickie forgot to give the pen back to me and he went on home and then tonight, and he comes up to me and he says, "Brother Rodney, uh, I - here's your pen. I want to, I want to give it back to you." And I'd say, "Thank you." And I'd put in my pocket and tell him I appreciate it and so forth - that he brought it back. But, now, has Dickie given me anything? Huh? He hasn't given me anything , has he? He just gave me, what? Gave me back what I'd already loaned to him to use

2.12 Constructed Dialogue Dramatizing Scripture

One of the particularly interesting uses of constructed dialogue in the sermons is the speaker's use of this mechanism to re-create a former event which is itself a dramatization. In other words, the speaker creates dialogue to dramatize what is represented in the Scriptures which are, in fact, themselves dramatizations of past

events. There are several interesting features to this particular use of constructed dialogue, such as the speaker's attribution of constructed dialogue to both human and non-human characters and the interaction of the speaker's constructed dialogue and the constructed dialogue of the Scriptures. First of all, attention should be drawn to the Scriptures as constructed dialogue. The Scriptures quoted or alluded to by the speaker (in fact the entirety of Scripture) by virtue of their written format are records of events and not specifically events themselves. Thus, the narrative and dialogue found in the Scriptures, and herein quoted by the speaker, represents the Biblical authors' reconstruction of particular events. This does not mean that the Scriptures are not accurate or true or lacking in any of the spiritual or esthetic value invested in them by the community. Rather, it simply reflects the concept that what is written or spoken is a creative representation of an event and not the event itself. In fact, in extract 35 the speaker actually refers to Scripture to argue similarly that the Word of God (i.e. the Scriptures) is living and active and has creative power. Furthermore, the thrust of these sermons is to propose the idea that not only is God's Word creative but man's words, likewise, have creative power.

Extract 35

Over and over again, the world was formed how? By God speaking. It was by the spoken Word of God and there's power in that spoken word.....And, man was given the ability to create with his words. Words would become mighty tools in the mouth of man."

The sermons are full of instances in which the pastor directly quotes, or reads from the Scriptures, which could be considered cases of direct reporting of

constructed dialogue. In cases like this, the act of the speaker does not create a new context through constructed dialogue, but nonetheless dramatizes meaning by bringing the dramatized event of Scripture into the speaker's current speaking context. Bakhtin ([1975]1981) notes: "...that the speech of another, once enclosed in a context, is - no matter how accurately transmitted - always subject to certain semantic changes. The context embracing another's word is responsible for dialogizing background, whose influence can be very great. Given the appropriate methods for framing, one may bring about fundamental changes even in another's utterance accurately quoted"(341). It can be argued that the pastor's quotations of Scripture are in many cases significantly changed , when taken from the original context of the Scriptures and brought, in some abbreviated form, to the context of the sermon speaking event, in order to make a particular point in the sermon.

In addition to the directly quoted Scripture passages, the pastor also takes creative license to further dramatize such passages through constructed dialogue. In the extracts that follow, the speaker both directly quotes the Scripture passage and then, in an effort to emphasize, re-creates the constructed dialogue therein and produces a new context and a new bit of constructed dialogue.

Extract 36

First of all, I want you to notice what she did. Look at verse thirty-eight.

“Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord.’” She said, “Lord, I-I submit to you. I-I’m your servant. “ And then she said, “ Let it be to me according to your word.” What is she saying?

Extract 37

Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.' Le-Le-Let me interpret that for you. You know what I think she said, "Glory Hallelujah I'm pregnant! Jesus the Son of God is going to be my child!" Now this woman is excited.

In each of these extracts, the speaker begins by directly quoting a portion of Scripture and then re-creating, through constructed dialogue the dialogue recorded in the passage. The first extracts are part of a longer discourse that the pastor quotes in entirety concerning the appearance of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary. In each case, the speaker quotes a portion of dialogue from Scripture attributed to Mary and then constructs a new dialogue which restates the dialogue in the current context of the sermon event. This not only draws attention to and emphasizes the point, but also makes the event of remote past a living, current, and personal experience for the audience. In each case, the speaker introduces the constructed dialogue with the phrase, "She said," the same formula used for other constructed dialogue not associated with Scripture.

In extracts 38 and 39, the speaker does not specifically quote a particular Scripture passage or verse, but implies such in his constructed dialogue re-creating the event.

Extract 38

Tradition. High things that we have respected and so forth. Our traditions - you remember Jesus talking to a group of folks one day, and he said: "I'll tell you what's wrong with you, " he said, "Your traditions have rendered void the Word of God in your life. Your traditions have just rendered it void." So

all of that knowledge, uh, that exalted itself - all that's got to be, be brought down.

In extract 38, the speaker indicates that he is not certain of the exact context of the Scripture passage that he is attempting to emphasize through constructed dialogue, but uses an indefinite referring expression "a group of folks" , which operates as a recontextualization phrase (cf. Bahktin[1975]1981) and the phrase "one day," which indicates indefinite time. He introduces the constructed dialogue with the past tense verb form and third person pronoun, and then constructs a dialogue passage which is also framed in a layering format, characteristic of these sermons (discussed subsequently in section 2.13).

In extract 39, the speaker again chooses not to make a direct quote of a particular passage, although he has a particular one in mind as he creates the dialogue: "I'm going to open up the windows of heaven for you, and I'm going to bless you" (a paraphrase of Malachi 3:10):

Extract 39

But when we go beyond that we begin to give and make offerings to God, then He - you know what He says? Says, "I'm going to pen up the windows of heaven for you. And I'm going to bless you. And there's going to be powerful blessings that will fall upon you."

The most interesting thing about these two extracts is that they attribute speech to a non-human, a deity, who is perceived as a very real and present character in this speech event. The dramatization of the Scriptural words of God attempts to bring the character of God into the present context of the sermon event and into interaction with

the audience. The constructed dialogue herein is one method for conjuring up or summoning the presence of God into the current context in which the speaker and audience are already actors.

Extract 40 is a case in which the speaker introduces what appears to be a directly quoted passage of Scripture only to then switch to a creative, constructed dialogue (represented by italics) that is not marked overtly as separate from the direct quote. The result is a dramatized dialogue that is a combination of both direct Scriptural quote and creatively constructed dialogue.

Extract 40

And you know what I think? It's not said, not spelled out here, but I believe at that very moment, God and that young gal did business and she became pregnant and the result was our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. She said, "And let it be to me according to your word. *I believe it. As you have spoken it, as the message has come from God, I believe it.*" And the power of God then overshadowed her, and she became with child.

. We have seen, then, that the Scriptures, by virtue of their written form, are records of events. The dialogue found in the Scriptures represent the Biblical authors' reconstruction or dramatization of particular events prior to the written record. When the speaker creates dialogue to reiterate what has been directly quoted from Scripture, he is dramatizing what is, in fact, a dramatization itself. In addition, even when the speaker directly quotes a Scriptural dialogue, without the creation of new dialogue related to it, the act of quoting itself can be said to be a dramatization and the creation of a new context, because "...when an utterance is repeated by a current speaker, it exists primarily, if not only, as an element of the reporting context, although its

meaning resonates with association with its reported context...the words have ceased to be those of the speaker to whom they are attributed, having been appropriated by the speaker who is repeating them" (Tannen, 1989:101).

2.13 Demonstrating Competence: Semantic Layering

As previously mentioned, another of the speaker's goals in this event, relative to his concern for the evaluation of his self by the hearers, is the demonstration of his competence as a performer of this specific genre of speaking. This "act of expression on the part of the performer is thus marked as subject to evaluation for the way it is done, for the relative skill and effectiveness of the performer's display of competence" (Bauman 1977:11). In fact, members of this community are regularly forthcoming with the expression of their opinions among themselves concerning the competence of a pastor to perform the sermon effectively, and this evaluation often influences their relationship with the pastor and, in some cases, their decision to disassociate themselves from the community and join another church where they perceive the pastor to be a more competent preacher, i.e. more "anointed" or "powerful."

I will explore two features of the speech of this pastor that can be interpreted as marking his attempts to demonstrate his competence and discourse prowess to secure the favorable evaluation of his performance by the audience. The first feature I will discuss in some detail is what I will call semantic layering, describing its structure and various uses. The second feature to be discussed is the speaker's ability to bring examples of everyday events into the discourse and attempt to give religious

perspective to them for the purpose of emphasizing the message he is conveying through the sermon.

To call attention to and emphasize something important, the speaker employs a rhetorical device I will call "layering." This concept is similar to what Longacre (1983) calls "rhetorical underlining" and Jakobson (1968) calls "grammatical parallelism." In layering, the speaker emphasizes a particular point or idea by means of a series of statements (at least three) that follow a general and similar form, while at the same time offering elaborated semantic information that serves to convey the speaker's fully intended message and produce speaker's intended effect in the listener. As Longacre notes, the speaker ". . . does not want you to miss the point of the story so he employs extra words at that point" (1983:26). Layering is used to give a more elaborated perspective to a simple point. It is likewise marked by certain prosodic features such as a more rhythmic stress and intonation pattern, which is evidence of its dramaturgical features. Elaboration could just as easily be done by means of a more straightforward, linear approach rather than through a mechanism that calls attention to itself as a carefully crafted performance, and one that can be said to reflect the rather prevalent use of parallelistic systems found in biblical discourse (Jakobson 1968:600).

The semantic layering technique contains three sections: the opening statement, the layering sequence and the closing statement. The opening statement does not appear to follow any obligatory form and is highlighted by the fact that a layering sequence follows it. For the layering technique to be so identified, I will say that it must be a series of at least three (but sometimes more) statements/phrases that clearly follow a similar syntactic form, as in the following:

Extract 41

Opening Statement: **"There's power, you see, in the Word. All power is in the Word. Now,) if the word of God has power, then**

Layering: **it has power over disease,
it has power over demonic activity in our lives,
it has , it has power over poverty,
it has power over everything.**

Closing Statement: **Why? Because every word of God has power."**

In this particular layering section, each statement follows the form "it has power over ____." The layering sequence basically serves to provide some sort of elaboration relative to the opening statement. Within this data, the layering elaborates in the following five ways:

A. Elaboration by further definition - i.e. breaks a general concept into greater detail. It could be said that this layering answers the question "what" in relation to the opening statement. In extract 42, the layering sequence further defines what is the question mentioned in the opening statement ("I have a question"):

Extract 42

Opening Statement: **Now you don't have to raise your hand but let me ask you a question this morning,**

Layering: **"how many of you have a health problem that are here today?**

How many of you have a financial problem?

How many of you have, uh, a problem that, uh, that relates to, uh, to emotional hurts?

Any- anybody here today having a problem in relationships?

Closing Statement: Well, I want to tell you when we finish this morning, I think you're going to see that it's not that you have a, a health problem, or a financial problem, or a emotional hurt problem, or a, uh, whatever else I asked. But you, what you're going have is a , is a word problem. You really have a problem deciding whose word you're going to take.

In extract 43, the layering sequence likewise gives further definition of that which is said in the opening statement, this time by amplifying what kind of activity the speaker means by the statement "she goes" :

Extract 43

Opening Statement: She goes all the way through there

Layering: magnifying,
glorifying,
exalting the Lord.

Closing Statement She's excited.

Finally, in extract 44, the speaker expands on his opening statement regarding the creation of the world by describing the nature of the created world as being formed in the past and presently held together and regulated by the word of God:

Extract 44

Opening Statement: Now, is it any mystery, then,

Layering: that a world that was created,

that was formed,
 that is held together
 that is regulated by the word of God -

Closing Statement: is it any mystery that, that world is affected by the
 word of God today?

It can be noted that in the preceding extract, whatever syntactic constraints that may operate over this rhetorical device, tense does not appear to one of them. Although the speaker uses the same verb (BE), he shifts from past to present tense within the layering sequence. Within the data overall, the speaker varies in his construction of layering sequences from adherence to an exact syntactic form across the sequence, as in extract 41, to a less consistent, but nonetheless similar form, as in extracts 42 and 43.

B. Elaboration by explaining causality - i.e. it presents the causes that lead to or have some influence on the opening statement. This layering series generally provides answers to the question "why." In extract 45, the layering sequence follows the conjunction "because," indicating the speaker's attempt to explain the causality of one's difficulty in "believing God."

Extract 45

Opening Statement: Because, you see the things that we know keep us from
 believing God,because

Layering: everything that God tells us we gonna first filter through
 our denominational training,
 we gonna filter it through our experience,

we gonna filter it through our knowledge of logic,
 we gonna filter it through our, our knowledge of, uh, of
 science,

Closing Statement: we're gonna filter it through whatever we've ever been
 exposed to and taught and learned.

In extract 46, although no overt causality marker (e.g. "because") is used, the speaker gives reasons why the word of God makes one feel good, thus implying causality:

Extract 46

Opening Statement: You know a lot of people say, "Yeah, word of God it
 makes me feel good, I feel better after having read it and
 so forth.

Layering: It's, it's comforting,
 it's, uh, it's encouraging.
 Its, uh, it's inspiring.

Closing Statement: But listen, that's not what we're saying.

Immediately following this section, the speaker once again uses the layering technique with the same series of words (i.e. comforting, encouraging, inspiring), but does so to further elaborate the notion expressed in the opening statement ("Every word of God has power"), rather than expressing causality. This stringing together of layering attempts is a common rhetorical strategy of this speaker and can be interpreted as evidence of some sophistication of ability to manipulate the device in the discourse.

C. Elaboration by giving supporting reasons for the opening statement. In extract 47, which is a prayer at the end of a sermon, the speaker makes an opening statement and then subsequently presents several supporting reasons that can be said to justify the validity of the opening statement. As with explaining causality, this layering sequence answers the question "why," but without any suggestion or indication that these reasons have any causal relationship to the opening statement.

Extract 47

Opening Statement:	Heavenly Father be it unto us according to Thy word.
Layering:	<p>You have said that You would send Your word and heal.</p> <p>You have said that Your word would be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.</p> <p>You said that if we would hide Your word in our hearts then we would have shield against sinning against You.</p> <p>Lord ,You've said that if we would speak Your word in agreement, that we could be saved, that Jesus is Lord.</p>
Closing Statement:	So Father, this morning we say, "Be it unto us according to Thy Word."

D. Elaboration by giving examples. In extract 48, the speaker uses constructed dialogue to construct the layering sequence. This sequence of layered, constructed

dialogue can be said to provide examples to illustrate how one's life is negatively affected by words.

Extract 48

Opening Statement: **And that to know that our life is regulated by what we say.**

Layering: (pause)" I tell you what, I'm just so tired."
 (pause) " I am so hungry I am about to starve to death."
 (pause) "I'm so mad I could die."

Closing Statement: (pause) **You ever think about those kind of words?**

This extract was also mentioned in the previous discussion on constructed dialogue, where this kind of dramatization (i.e. constructed dialogue) was proposed as evidence for the speaker's attempts to invite participation from the audience in the construction of meaning and, in so doing, emphasizing solidarity with the congregation. This is a good example to suggest that the goals of mediation of dual roles and the demonstration of competence are both subsumed under a larger desire on the part of the speaker to effect a positive social evaluation of self, and that, as such, these goals are interdependent.

In extract 49, the speaker is attempting to call the listener's attention to a specific felt need ("an area in your life"). To give examples of the kinds of needs about which he is talking, the speaker uses the layering technique.

Extract 49

Opening Statement: **Now I want you, I want you target that area in your life right now.**

Extract 51

Opening Statement: I want to tell you on the authority of God's word, it's going to work out.

Layering: Don't make peace with sickness.
 Don't make your peace with imperfection.
 Don't make your peace by accepting alot of things.

Closing Statement: Just go ahead and believe God's word.

The closing statement provides closure to the layering sequence and provides a point from which to make transition, i.e. to advance to the next point in the discourse. In the examples I found in the data, the closing statement can function in one of the following ways:

A. Restating the opening statement in some form. In extract 52, the speaker directly restates the notion that "every word of God has power", and in extract 53, he actually quotes again the scripture passage that is the focus of the opening statement:

Extract 52

Opening Statement: There's power, you see, in the Word. All power is in the Word. Now, if the word of God has power,

Layering: then it has power over disease,
 it has power over demonic activity in our lives,
 it has , it has power over poverty,
 it has power over everything.

Closing Statement: Why? Because every word of God has power.

Extract 53

Opening Statement: **Heavenly Father be it unto us according to Thy word.**

Layering: **You have said that You would send Your word and heal.**
You have said that Your word would be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

You said that if we would hide Your word in our hearts then we would have shield against sinning against You.

Lord , You've said that if we would speak Your word in agreement, that we could be saved, that Jesus is Lord.

Closing Statement: **So Father, this morning we say, "Be it unto us according to Thy Word."**

B. Summarizing the concept(s) expressed in the layering sequence. In extract 54, the speaker summarizes the activities expressed in the layering sequence ("magnifying, glorifying, exalting") with a single word "excited," and in extract 55, gives a synopsis ("all of the aspects") of the details expressed in the layering sequence which elaborate the reference to Hebrews 4:12 in the opening statement.

Extract 54

Opening Statement: **She goes all the way through there**

Layering: **magnifying,**

**glorifying,
exalting the Lord.**

Closing Statement **She's excited.**

Extract 55

Opening Statement: **You remember the first, uh, message, we really zeroed in on, uh, uh Hebrews, four twelve,**

Layering: **that the Word of God is , uh, is alive and active.**
 It's energy-laden.
 And its sharper than any two-edged sword

Closing Statement: **and we discussed all of the aspects of it.**

Finally, in extract 56, the speaker also summarizes the details expressed in the layering sequence with a triad of single lexical items ("exposed to, taught, learned") that attempt to categorize the detail previously elaborated:

Extract 56

Opening Statement: **Because, you see the things that we know keep us from believing God, because**

Layering: **everything that God tells us we gonna first filter through our denominational training,**
 we gonna filter it through our experience,
 we gonna filter it through our knowledge of logic,
 we gonna filter it through our, our knowledge of, uh, of science,

Closing Statement: **we're gonna filter it through whatever we've ever
been exposed to and taught and learned.**

C. Corrects the concept expressed in the layering sequence. In these examples, the speaker has used a layering sequence to call attention to a fallacy or misconception that he then attempts to correct with the closing statement. In extract 57, the speaker uses a "not that, but this" kind of construction to correct the congregation's misperceptions concerning their possible problems (i.e. health, finances, emotions, relationships).

Extract 57

Opening Statement: **Now you don't have to raise your hand but let me ask
you a question this morning,**

Layering: **"how many of you have a health problem that are here
today?**

How many of you have a financial problem?

**How many of you have, uh, a problem that, uh, that
relates to, uh , to emotional hurts?**

**Any- anybody here today having a problem in relation-
ships?**

Closing Statement: **Well, I want to tell you when we find this morning, I
think you're going see that it's *not* that you have a, a
health problem, or a financial problem, or a emotional
hurt problem, or a, uh, whatever else I asked. *But* you,
what you're going have is a , is a word problem. You**

really have a problem deciding whose word you're going to take.

In extract 58, the speaker also uses the closing statement to correct the layering sequence message, but instead of using an overt “not that, but this” kind of structure in this section, he anticipates the correction by placing the negative particle in the layering sequence itself. Thus, the speaker can use a positive imperative in the closing statement to correct the misconception expressed by the negative structure in the layering sequence. In this case, “just” serves as a positive marker in contrast to the preceding series of negatives (“don’t”).

Extract 58

Opening Statement:	I want to tell you on the authority of God's word, it's going to work out.
Layering:	Don't make peace with sickness. Don't make your peace with imperfection. Don't make your peace by accepting a lot of things.
Closing Statement:	Just go ahead and believe God's word.

D. Emphasizes or calls further attention to the layering sequence. In the only example of this kind in this sermon data (extract 59), the speaker again calls attention to the message expressed in the layering sequence by means of a question: “You ever think about those kinds of words?” In this question, the speaker uses the word “those” anaphorically to focus attention back on the words of the layering sequence.

Extract 59

Opening Statement: **And that to know that our life is regulated by what we say.**

Layering: (bpause)" I tell you what, I'm just so tired."
 (bpause) " I am so hungry I am about to starve to death."
 (bpause) "I'm so mad I could die."

Closing Statement: (bpause) **You ever think about those kind of words?**

Thus, semantic layering is one of the rhetorical devices used by this speaker to demonstrate his competence as a performer of this genre of speech event, or as "an anointed preacher."

A noticeable feature present in many of these extracts (e.g., 41/52; 42/57; 45/56; 48/59; 49; 51/58) is the way in which this pastor frequently includes secular experiences in the layering sequence and a scriptural or sacred response to those experiences in the closing statement so that the rhetorical performance is often organized in the service of bringing the secular within the realm of the sacred.

2.14 Metaphor

Another feature that can be interpreted as addressing the speaker's attempt to fulfill the hearers' expectation that he be competent, is the appropriate manipulation of metaphor in the discourse. Richards (1936) and Black (1954) have argued that metaphor is best understood by considering its contextual aspect rather than its meaning isolated from any context. Fernandez (1974;1977) has claimed that metaphor provides a way for people to organize their thinking and has made a connection

between metaphor and ritual action: "It is proposed here that metaphors provide organizing images which ritual action puts into effect. This ritualization of metaphor enables [those] participating in ritual to undergo apt integrations and transformations in their experience" (101-102; brackets mine). Crocker (1977) has further emphasized the importance of understanding not only the underlying structure of metaphor, but its performative context as well (Darrand & Shupe, 1983). He argues that metaphor "provides a structure for experience but also expresses cultural realities" (1983:19 - 20).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have argued that metaphor provides a "structuring mechanism in culture" (Darrand & Shupe, 1983:21), noting that:

Primarily on the basis of linguistic evidence, we have found that most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature. And we have found a way to identify just what the metaphors are that structure how we perceive, how we think, and what we do (1980:2).

They further argue that metaphors are:

Pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (1980:3).

From their claims, Darrand & Shupe argue that metaphor can be understood to be a "systematically related, coherent, and organizing image" (1983:21). Ricoeur (1976; 1977; 1978a; 1978b) has made a connection between metaphor and discourse, claiming that metaphors don't exist as separate lexicalizations, but "come to exist only in the event of discourse" (1983:22). He further argues that metaphor and spoken discourse are both "effectuated as an event, but . . . understood as meaning" (1978b:136). Thus, Ricoeur concludes that "there are no metaphors . . . without certain contexts" (1978b:135) and that "it is the context in which metaphor is situated that

reduces its polysemic ambiguity” (Darrand & Shupe, 1983:23). Finally, van Dijk (1972) has proposed that

...a whole text may be metaphorical . . . This type of text is well known from medieval literature: ALLEGORY. Other forms like the parable, pastiche, irony are derived from this type. Characteristic is the fact that the text itself does not specify possible means of disambiguation. We may therefore consider the text to have a coherent SR [semantic representation] in its own right, which may receive a literal interpretation. Metaphoricalness then, can be decided only on intertextual, pragmatic or referential grounds (1972:262; emphasis his).

In this analysis, I will use the term “metaphor” to mean the inclusion in the discourse of examples of secular events and experiences that are common and familiar to the congregation, but which are claimed by the speaker to illustrate sacred truth. By mentioning a common, everyday event or experience, the speaker can accomplish two things. First of all, he can be said to emphasize his solidarity with the congregation by the accessing of secular experiences which can be interpreted as an attempt by him to attend to the needs of the audience by trying to make a transcendent, abstract, spiritual message relevant and concrete for the congregation. He indicates that sacred reality is somehow cloaked in secular experience and attempts to uncover that reality by dramatizing the experience and inviting the hearers to join him in the construction of the sacred message by transforming that common, everyday secular experience into something spiritual or sacred instead.

Secondly, giving secular experiences sacred meaning, and involving the audience in the process can be interpreted as indication of some degree of sophisticated skill in this particular kind of verbal art performance. As primary speaker in this speech event, the pastor is expected to coordinate the interplay between secular experience, the transformation of that experience into something of sacred significance, and the

audience's inferences so that sacred meaning can be constructed and, if the perception is that this coordination proceeds effectively, the speaker can be positively evaluated by the congregation. The degree to which this kind of metaphor is used by preachers within the larger Southern Baptist community will vary greatly, in relation to the interplay of both speaker's and congregation's expectations on this point. In this particular community and with this particular speaker, the use of metaphor occurs regularly in each sermon, although not with unusual frequency.

In extract 60, the pastor is attempting to make the point that there exists in human beings a "spiritual gap" that separates them from the kingdom of God on the one hand and the kingdom of Satan on the other. Further, the pastor claims that it is through words that the "gap" can be closed. In line 1, the speaker makes a straightforward assertion of this point ("There's a gap in, in all of us..").

Extract 60

- 1** Uh, there's, there's a gap in, in all of us, in our lives at various points. You know what a, what a gap is ? A gap is a distance between what is and what oughta be. 'Bout the best way, I guess, to describe it: the distance between what is and what oughta be. And, uh, and I know you've made gaps before,
- 5** uh, out of, uh, three or four strands of wire and put a , a post on one end of it , you know, and, and make a hook on, uh, one post. If you can put the gap up, you close that distance between what is - where the fence stops over here and where it stops over here - you close that to make what oughta be. Make the fence all the way around. It's a gap. Now (pause) it's God's
- 10** intention for everything to be as He desires it to be. And what you say moves you to whichever side of the gap you speak. For instance, uh, if

there, if there's always griping going on, coming out of your mouth, it is moved you in the direction of doing what? Widening the gap. But if there are words of encouragement and the words of blessing, uh, coming, then
 15 you are moving into the position of closing the gap.

Following the assertion of the point, the speaker then accesses the common (to this community) secular experience of building fences and dramatizes for the audience this experience by describing it in some detail. In so doing, he invites the audience to access their own experience relative to gaps and fences and infer the sacred meaning behind it. The speaker chooses the discourse particle “now”, which can be interpreted as signaling the hearers that the dramatization is concluded and that henceforth the secular meaning of “gap” will be dropped in favor of the sacred meaning just inferred. Thus, in line 11, and subsequently throughout the discourse where the word “gap” appears, it instantiates a spiritual concept, not a secular one.

In extract 61, the point being made concerns the belief that God’s Word has power over people, directly expressed in line 1 (“There’s some tremendous breakthroughs that are coming on the, uh discovery of the power of the Word of God”):

Extract 61

1 There're some tremendous breakthroughs that are coming on the, uh,
 discovery of the power of the Word of God. If you, uh, read any magazine
 at times. You know sometimes when you, when you go to the doctor for a
 report or, or for some illness and take your children or something and you
 5 have to wait, uh, that's about the only time I ever read some magazines.

And, uh, recently I've had the occasion to go with a friend to uh the doctor and had to wait a couple of hours, uh. I've also went back to, to have, uh, my own neck checked and had to wait a good while 'fore, 'fore I ever saw the doctor. And so I looked at the magazines that were there in the, uh, uh,
 10 in the waiting room. And there're a lot of medical magazines there and, the thing that has impressed me is the fact that the breakthroughs that are coming, many of them are lining up with God's Word, of what God has
 13 already said. Oooh the power that comes when we agree with God's Word.

In this case, the secular experience accessed by the speaker is that of reading magazines in a doctor's office, as expressed in lines 2, 5, 9 and 10. In line 12 the speaker transforms the everyday secular experience of magazine reading into one in which there is an experience of God's Word ("many of them are lining up with God's Word"). In so doing, the speaker can be said to reinforce the point he has been attempting to make regarding the power of God's Word over one's life.

This brief discussion has claimed that metaphor is a device by which the pastor attempts, within the oral sermon performance, to give sacred perspective to secular events and experiences. In this sense, it can be said that metaphor is a basis of analysis throughout this study of attempts within the speech events of this community to make the secular sacred. It might be profitable for future research to look further at this phenomenon in the sermon event, as well as considering metaphor as a larger framework for describing the data of other speech events in this community in which speakers attempt to make the secular sacred.

2.15 Conclusion

We have seen that the sermon is the primary forum for reciting, explaining and augmenting the community worldview, as well as an administrative mechanism for the transmission of important information. Beyond that, however, the sermon is a narrative speech event in which the speaker, audience, and God interact to construct meaning and build social relationships. The speaker, as dominant speaker, but co-participant, dramatizes a message in which both the sacred (God) and the secular (the congregation) interact. The role of the speaker (pastor) in the sermon event is to use his verbal performance to both mediate his own role and his message between the two polar extremes representing the sacred and the secular such that a positive evaluation of his self by the audience accrues. The result is a dramatization marked by a variety of linguistic features such as pronoun choice, use of the imperative with optional degrees of hedging, and constructed dialogue.

Regarding the choice of pronouns, I have shown that the speaker oscillates between the choice of the “I/me” pronoun form on the one hand, which can be interpreted as emphasizing his role as spiritual authority, and the “we” inclusive form on the other, which can conversely be taken to focus attention on the speaker’s solidarity with the congregation. With the use of imperative forms, the speaker seeks to influence the behavior of the congregation and, in so doing, can be said to focus attention on his role as spiritual authority. As with the choice of pronouns, if the speaker perceives the potential of his verbal performance to engender a negative evaluation of his self by the congregation, he has the option to hedge the imperative in a variety of ways. It can be argued that a preacher’s particular style is, in part,

influenced by where his verbal performance falls along the continuum marked by these features.

Building on Tannen (1989) and Yule & Mathis (1990), I have argued that the speaker in the sermons takes the stage and constructs dialogue, making his sermon a drama and his listeners an interpreting audience, thus creating involvement by the audience and making the entire event what Brenneis calls "shared territory" (Brenneis, 1986). The constructed dialogue of the sermon dramatization invites the audience to join in the interpretation and construction of meaning and further helps build solidarity between the pastor and the congregation. I proposed a variety of constructed dialogue types, borrowing some categories from Tannen (1989) and suggesting new ones that better describe the data. These included dialogue as a reconstruction of real, past events, dialogue as instantiation, dialogue eliciting audience response, dialogue as inner speech, dialogue as creating a sequence of events, and dialogue dramatizing Scripture.

Among the devices used to demonstrate the pastor's competence as a preacher is semantic layering, a rhetorical device in which the speaker attempts to elaborate his point by means of a series of no less than three statements that follow a similar syntactic form and share some kind of connected meaning relationship. Additionally, the speaker, in an effort to demonstrate his competence, can create metaphor by bringing into the discourse certain secular experiences and inviting the audience to join with him in assigning them sacred meaning. If effectively coordinated by the speaker, the interplay between secular experiences, the transformation of those secular experiences into something sacred, and the inferences the audience are invited to make, can be interpreted as a credit to his competence in this verbal art form.

The pastor, I would suggest, is both playwright and actor. As playwright, he stages, casts, and scripts with dialogue a drama in which, as actor, he assumes a variety of personas, creating and giving life and breath to real characters. It is this dramaturgical quality of the pastor's verbal performance that makes the sermon event a creative construction of meaning rather than simply a linear transmission of information. From the pastor's own "drama", we borrow these concluding words that succinctly and poetically summarize the key argument in this analysis:

"And, man was given the ability to create with his words. Words would become mighty tools in the mouth of man."

CHAPTER THREE

THE ORAL TESTIMONY

3.0 Introduction

In Southern Baptist Churches, particularly those in small towns and rural areas, the oral narrative called "the testimony" serves a very important role in the overall sociolinguistic fabric of the speech community. The testimony is not a ritualized oral tradition (i.e. it does not take the form of liturgy nor does it have obligatory structural sequence and/or content, etc.), but could be on the way to becoming such. "Giving one's testimony" or "sharing one's testimony" is not the province of a select group of people within the community, but is considered a normal part of one's Christian faith and faithful believers are expected to be able to perform their testimony when called upon to do so. A testimony normally describes one's conversion experience at which time one "became a Christian", was "born again," or "got saved," but can also be used to recount other more current experiences in which the speaker has had some personal encounter with God, for example a physical healing, a "call" to the ministry, etc. In fact, in many similar communities it is considered preferable for one to be creative and share information of a fresh encounter with God, rather than recounting the same, much cited conversion event. This indicates the premium placed by the community on one's relationship with God being one that is living and current, rather than simply centered on a single historical event. In the delivery of the testimony, the speaker is almost always in front of an audience of some kind - small group, congregation, etc.

and the event of "sharing one's testimony" or "giving one's testimony" is a formal and recognized event, although the performance of it is not ritualized.

The testimonies I have analyzed were collected from the same group who have been the focus of my overall study and were taped at the home of one of the participants in a single session in which the sole activity was the performance of oral testimonies. I asked each of the six speakers, in turn, to spontaneously share their testimony (they did not know prior to the meeting that this would be required of them) and their performances were tape recorded. Oral testimonies are normally formal, elicited events and are customarily spontaneously performed when one is called on to do so as, for example, in a worship service or revival meeting. It is possible for testimonies to appear in less formal (and less sacred) social events (e.g., a dinner conversation - see Chapter 5, section 5.2), but when they do, they are usually elicited in some way. Thus, this particular session in which these oral testimonies were collected was neither an artificial setting nor an unusual procedure for the production of this verbal performance.

In the following analysis of the representative oral testimonies of this speech community, I will argue that the speech event is, in fact, an oral performance that dramatizes a particular rite of passage that is essential not only for membership in this community, but is also a foundation around which those who have experienced it order their lives. The use of a "dramatic" metaphor seems appropriate to describe what appears to be going on in the testimonies, first of all because the testimonies are different in style and, to some extent, in specific content, and are thus imbued with a creative aspect. Secondly, the testimony is directed to an audience and the speakers employ a variety of dramatic devices in order to accomplish their performance. It is,

therefore, a creative and somewhat improvisational performance, but one which is constrained by the boundaries of a basic structure, or "script".

I will present an analysis of the basic "script" that these testimonies all follow and propose that this structure and its sequence have dramaturgical significance. I will also look at the staging techniques the speakers employ to establish what is backgrounded knowledge and what is to be foregrounded, and will argue that the staging is accomplished structurally and textually. I will further argue that in addition to scripting and staging the speech event, the speaker also casts himself in a dual role, or assumes a "persona" that captures the important dichotomous distinction relative to the transcendent quality of the conversion event. In order to discuss this, I will also describe the two worlds of reality recognized by the community - the shared transcendent knowledge that makes up the world of the Sacred, and the intersubjective, common-sense, knowledge of everyday, secular life - and propose that the testimony event not only dramatizes an experience (conversion) in which the speaker transcends from one world to the other, but that "sharing one's testimony" is itself such an event.

Since the testimony performances dramatize the conversion or salvation experience of individual members of this community, it seems helpful to explore briefly the belief system underlying the speakers' performance and governing the particular perspective of the conversion experience exhibited in the discourse. In order to evaluate this underlying, theological system, I will draw from statements in the creed-like Baptist Faith and Message document and from a reference in the sermons of the pastor of this particular Baptist church community.

As previously noted (sec.1.20, Chapter 1), concerning conversion (I will use the terms “conversion” and “salvation” interchangeably), the Baptist Faith and Message (Hobbs 1971) states:

In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (1971: 55).

This community believes that salvation, while a “gift from God,” requires some kind of personal response.

This parallel activity on the part of God and man to accomplish the conversion event is reflected in the choices the speakers make in marking their oral discourse with a variety of linguistic features and it is through these two actions that we further understand that there are two worlds of reality between which the speakers move - the secular and the sacred.

3.1 The Testimony As Verbal Dramatization

The oral testimonies of this community are best described within the framework of dramatized verbal performance, in which the speakers actively create rather than recount an experience. The conversion experience which serves as the basic theme of the testimonies is itself a metaphor for what actually takes place in the performance of the testimony itself. Although the method is dramatization, the testimony is not limited to a theatrical performance but rather becomes an enactment (Abrahams, 1978) in which speaker and audience experience (not just talk about) a transcendent experience similar to that of the original conversion. Abrahams defines enactment as “...a cultural event in which community members come together to participate, employ

the deepest and most complex multivocal and polyvalent signs and symbols of their repertoire of expression, thus entering into a potentially significant experience” (1978:80). In fact, members of the community consider the speaker in a testimony to be a channel through whom the Spirit of God speaks and works. In other words, God is alive and active and inhabiting the testimony event and thus its participants experience Him even as they did in their conversion. Although situated in the reality of the everyday, common-sense world, the testimony event results in a transformation in which the speaker and his audience enter into and experience the transcendent world of reality (Demarest 1975), the Sacred which in turn transforms and informs the world of the everyday and through which the everyday, common-sense world is interpreted and assigned meaning. It is important to emphasize that the oral testimonies, though dominated exclusively by a single speaker are nonetheless, performances in which the audience is invited, by means of dramatic devices, to participate in evaluation, interpretation and creation of meaning. In this sense, the oral testimony as dramatization is much like the sermon event in that, as a performance, “it is part of the essence of performance that it offers to the participants a special enhancement of experience, bringing with it a heightened intensity of communicative interaction which binds the audience to the performer . . . and to the extent that they value his performance, they will allow themselves to be caught up in it ” (Bauman, 1977:43 - 44).

The knowledge that is shared in the testimony event is what Demarest (1975) calls “shared transcendent knowledge”, which she defines as “...claimed knowledge of that which cannot be totally known or communicated, which extends beyond empirical referents and which can be acquired only by the careful following of certain

procedures and through the aid of specific sources" (1975:2). In other words, this shared transcendent knowledge forms the alternate, sacred, infinite world of reality wherein God is real and personally interacts with people, and which contains all the belief systems, doctrines, common experiences, predispositions, attitudes, etc. that are paramount for the ordering of the community and the living of one's individual life. The "secular" everyday world of reality, which is finite and empirical and sensorally perceived, is less meaningful for this community apart from its assignment as a manifestation of the divine truth through the interpretive lens of the sacred world. However, the experiences of everyday life are not automatically assigned as such, but are, according to Garfinkel (1967:79) "actively membershiped" through the management of the testimony performance. Thus, members of the community who live sensorally in the secular world of the everyday, transcend that world to live in the reality of the sacred, which "...receives the accent of reality while the province of the everyday assumes the character of fictitiousness" (Demarest, 1975: 4).

The oral testimony provides a good example of the dramatic devices the members of this community use to interpret events in everyday life within the sacred context and infuse them with meaning. The speaker reenacts the transcendent experience called conversion through the dramatized testimony, marking this transcendence with linguistic features. And, like the conversion experience, the testimony performance becomes a transcendent experience jointly shared by audience and speaker.

In addition to the testimony's interpretive and transcendent quality is its contribution to group solidarity by means of the joint sharing of specific transcendent knowledge and experience that is exclusive to the community. The speaker relives his conversion experience and his formal entry into the group, while the audience,

through his dramatization, is invited to relive theirs as well. This shared experience and instantiation of shared knowledge reinforces the social harmony of the community and asserts the peculiarity that marks the community as unique.

In the following analysis, I will examine some representative oral testimonies of this community as dramatizations of past events that seek to enjoin the audience for the interpretation of meaning and the augmentation of the group's shared knowledge and experience. First, I will look at the linear structure of the discourse as a series of scenes in the drama within which the speaker presents his performance and through which the "plot" of the drama is played out. Secondly, I will explore aspects of the testimony concerning the performance itself, specifically discussing linguistic devices that can be interpreted as marking the speakers' attempts to stage the drama, script it and cast it with characters to carry out the performance.

3.2 Structure of the Oral Testimony

Unlike testimonies of Pentecostal women (Lawless, 1983) or those of Christian Scientists (Demarest, 1975), the testimonies of members of this Southern Baptist church are not subject to a tight formulaic structure, but are open to the creative manipulation of the speaker in this aspect as well as in content and style of delivery. However, there is a basic structure that provides a general framework, or "script", that influences the staging of one's dramatization in the testimony performance. With each performance the testimony is likely to continue to follow the basic script and even begin to develop certain ritualized words, phrases or sentences. Nonetheless, there is always the improvisational aspect that will allow manipulation, variability and creativity in every performance. The structural categories of the testimony are regular

and frequent, but it cannot be argued that they are obligatory. It remains, therefore, a creative and somewhat improvisational performance.

What follows is an attempt at identifying and characterizing the underlying and basic (skeletal) script that guides the linear sequence of the narrative. In the six testimonies I looked at there appear to be six (6) units of structure that serve as the underlying framework for the testimony. Each of these units occurs either 83% or

Testimony	Orientation	Exposure	Conviction	Instruction	Conversion	WrapUp
1	X	X	-	X	X	X
2	X	X	X	X	X	X
3	X	X	X	-	X	X
4	X	X	X	X	X	X
5	X	X	X	X	X	X
6	X	X	X	X	X	X

FIGURE 7: STRUCTURAL UNITS OF ORAL TESTIMONIES

100% of the time (see Figure 7). These units are: 1) Orientation 2) Exposure 3) Conviction 4) Instruction and 5) Conversion and 6) Wrap Up.

This structure is similar to the analytic framework proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1966) in their discussion of narrative, which they define as “one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred” (1966:20). In their analysis, narrative is

structured with five basic components: orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution and coda. The orientation and wrap up units I have used seem to overlap well with Labov and Waltsky's units of orientation and coda, respectively. However, a direct mapping of the units of exposure, conviction, instruction and conviction that I have proposed with Labov and Waltesky's units of complicating action, evaluation and resolution does not seem to work as well. In the first place, Labov and Waletsky arrive at their units on the basis of an analysis of "the smallest unit of linguistic expression which defines functions of narrative - primarily the clause" (1966:13), which is analysis at a more discrete level than I have examined. Secondly, their detailed delineation of the units of complicating action and evaluation does not provide for a neat transfer of these units to the kind of structure that appears in the oral testimonies I examined, making it difficult to fit these samples into their framework. However, I would agree that the general concept of some kind of linear progression from orientation to complicating action to resolution to coda, as mapped out in Labov and Waltesky's model, would be applicable to my analysis of these oral testimonies.

3.3 Orientation

The orientation section is at the beginning of the narrative and serves the purpose of giving the listener a basic background concerning the speaker and his origins and his relation to the community prior to conversion. This section is marked by use of first person reference and the past tense form of verbs such as "born," "raised," and "grew up."

Extract 2

- A. **“Well I was born and raised in a Christian family ...”**
- B. **“I grew up thinking I was a Christian because...I went to church all the time..”**
- C. **“I was raised, I feel like, in a Christian home.....”**
- D. **“Well I was, I was raised in New Orleans. I lived there for thirteen years. And my Dad was Catholic and my Mom was Baptist.”**
- E. **“When I grew up - I grew up as a Mormon. Normal, high school kid, you know”**

3.4 Exposure

This section can be as short as a simple sentence or as long as several paragraphs. It basically serves to let the listener know how the speaker was initially exposed to Christianity and is marked by the phrase "to (the) church" and some reference to the habituality of the past action, either through modality and tense (would + present tense verb form) or some adverbial phrase such as "every week" or "every Sunday."

Extract 3

- A. **“So, uh, I was brought to church every week and I knew what I was supposed to do and what I wasn’t supposed to do.”**
- B. **“My Daddy went to Sunday morning service and my Mom would drag us to church on Sunday evenings or Saturday evenings, because it was more convenient, you know it was on a Saturday evening.”**
- C. **“He was very strict on his teachings as far as morals and things like that, but , uh, Mama was really the one who, uh, initiated the rod and staff**

that took, uh, took us to church every Sunday...every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, every Wednesday - anytime that there was a, a - the church doors was open we were there and she saw to it that we were there.

- D. "And I think one of the traits that they - that my Mom instilled in me was - I think that's one reason why I'm still in the traditionalism of going to church every Sunday... you know, every Sunday morning, every Sunday night and every Wednesday night, you're supposed to be in church..."
- E. "Then I dated this boy when I was sixteen - he was a Christian, he was going to be a preacher..... So, uhm, then he asked me to go to church and I'd go and they knew all the hymns - I didn't know how they knew them all...."

In extract 3A, the speaker uses the form "was brought" to mark past time relevant to coding time (CT) along with the adverbial phrase "every week" to indicate that this past time event was iterative. Similarly, in extract 3C, the speaker uses the adverbial phrase "every Sunday," this time with the simple past tense verb form "took." As Levinson (1983:75) points out, "...interpretation of such adverbials in English is systematically determined by (a) the calendrical vs. non-calendrical (and specifically deictic) modes of reckoning, and (b) the distinction between common noun units." However, unlike deictic forms such as "this", "last" or "next" that are frequently used in such adverbial phrases and indicate simple points in time, the word "every" indicates that the measure of time is iterative in aspect and suggestive of regularity of action, although not necessarily to be taken literally to mean "each and every week" or "each and every Sunday" in the period of time prior to CT.

In extracts 3B and 3E, the speakers make use of the modal "would" to mark the habitual nature of the past time. Notice also that the speaker in extract B makes plural the adverbial phrase "Sunday evening" to capture the same distinction illustrated by the use of "every" in extract A, specifically the iterative aspect of being "dragged to church."

In excerpt 3D, the speaker attempts to convey the same basic message found in the other examples, but does so by making a reference to a time prior to CT in which the "trait" of habitual church attendance was instilled in the speaker, subsequently shifting the deictic center to CT to explicitly detail what that habit was. The adverbial phrase "every Sunday" is used to mark the iterative aspect of the activity, but it is placed within the context of CT rather than referencing a prior time.

Perhaps the most salient feature of the examples in this section of the testimony is that the passive construction in A, the marking of agents other than speaker in B,C,D, and E and the use of "supposed to" in A and D can all be said to indicate that the speaker was not the primary agent of his or her actions. Rather, someone else is credited as causal agent in their church exposure and the reason for that exposure is not clearly marked. It is described variably as a habit (iterative forms), as convenient (B), as required (C), as tradition (D), as a mystery (E), or as something that one is "supposed to do" (A, D). Interestingly it is never claimed that it is for doctrinal or sacred reasons that these forced actions are undertaken by the speaker. This attribution of causal agency to someone other than speaker that helps distinguish this section (exposure) from the next one that follows: conviction.

3.5 Conviction

This section relates a very significant aspect of the overall conversion event in which the speaker vividly describes an emotional feeling related to a perceived need for conversion or relationship with God and also, in all but one case, describes the speaker's initiation of some sort of physical/ concrete response to this need. All but one of the subjects surveyed included this section so it can be considered optional, but very rarely omitted and, if omitted, then implied in the later statement of the conversion event. Furthermore, this section is distinguished from the preceding one by the speaker's attribution of causal agency to self rather than some other. In extract 4 the speaker marks the emotional state with the phrase "I reached the lowest point in my life of real depression and loneliness," and describes his responding action with "I called out to God," marking himself as the agent of the actions of "reaching" and "calling out."

Extract 4

"But, uh, anyway, it was during that time that *I reached* the lowest point in my life of real depression and loneliness and that was when I had the mountaintop experience where *I called out to God* and, and, uh, seven days after that is when I met Christine. And, I guess we, we were together for a little over a year and moved back to Pennsylvania -we got married."

In extract 5, the speaker uses the biblical metaphor of the "heart", which is considered the seat of spiritual experience, to describe his condition with "my heart was so heavy." He notes two different specific actions, one that could be argued to be

less self-initiated (crying in line 6) than the other (praying in line 7), but which both mark self as agent:

Extract 5

- 1** “And when I was eleven years old, one Sunday, I didn’t, uh, - I was in
church, sitting by my mother and I didn’t - and I can still remember
today, Bro. Rodney was preaching. I didn’t remember really, anything he
said. But when the invitation was given, I just felt the Spirit come on me
- ‘course I was young at that time , what it was. But, I just felt, you know,
6 my heart was so heavy and I started crying. And I said, ‘Mother, I need
to go up.’ ‘Well,’ Mother said, ‘Let’s pray.’ And then we prayed and she
8 said, ‘I want you to talk to Bro. Rodney before you go up.’”

In extract 6, the narrative sequence of events is not linear and the speaker mentions first the responding action (*I went and talked to Mr. Williams*) then, apparently decides to go back prior to this point in time and give more specific background. The phrase "and about this time, too" and the subsequent use of the past perfect verb form (had gotten saved) marks this strategy and what follows is the description of a series of events that occurred prior to the point in time marked with the statement "*I went and talked with Mr. Williams.*" Included in this backgrounded sequence of events is the phrase "*I wanted it*" , "it" being the results of the salvation/conversion experience observed by the speaker in other people’s behavior. Therefore, since the pronoun "it" anaphorically refers to something located prior to the past time of the first statement, it can argued that sequentially the phrase "*I wanted it,*"(referring to the emotional recognition of a need for something that others had resulting from conversion) precedes the statement "*I went and talked to Mr.*

Williams," (marking the speaker's subsequent responding action). Again, these actions (*"I went and talked," "I saw something," I wanted it,"* and *"I started going"*) all indicate the speaker as agent.

Extract 6

Then right before I was to marry Ronald, *I went and talked to Mr. Williams*. And about this time, too, several of my cousins had gotten saved - at Assembly of God churches, and a couple of Baptist churches and I talked to several of my cousins and *I saw something else* that they had that was like Ronald's family. And *I wanted it*. Ronald and I got married and the weekend that we got married, it was the last time I had ever set foot in the Catholic church for years, because than I started going to Natalbany Baptist."

Similarly, in extract 7, the speaker marks the responding action in the discourse sequence (*"I went to talk to his Daddy"*) prior to the reference to the emotional state (*"And I was all bothered"*). However, the fact that the reference to the emotional state uses a passive construction, thus assigning agency to someone or something other than speaker, is evidence that it belongs to the exposure section which is sequentially prior to the responding action which, conversely, attributes agency to the speaker as is customary for the current section. The implication with the phrase *"I was all bothered"* is that the speaker's bothered condition existed prior to the visit to the preacher and continued upon her arrival, at least until it was resolved through her conversion experience.

Extract 7

“ So he was all sad and he left and so I didn’t know what to do. So the next day, I went to talk to his Daddy, who was a preacher. And I was all bothered.”

It is important to note that these sections under consideration more or less blend together and overlap such that the actual boundaries between each of them are not clearly defined , being unmarked by any key transition word nor by any other distinguishing linguistic feature. However, though the boundaries may not be clear, once the speaker has arrived at the main point of the section, the clearer linguistic markings become evident and a distinct shift from the previous section is recognizable.

3.6 Instruction

In this section, the speaker refers to that point in which he received some sort of formal, verbal instruction regarding the nature and process of the conversion experience. This reference is instantiated in certain ritual phrases which exemplify both the jointly held and transcendent aspects of the shared transcendent knowledge of the community. Phrases such as "the plan of salvation" and "the gospel" each refer to a specific ritualized discourse which exegetically delineates the theological foundations and requirements essential for the experience, but which need no specification for the audience which shares the knowledge and experience of their meaning and significance. In extract 8, all but one of the subjects included this section in their testimony and all but one of these used the phrases "the plan of salvation " (8A, 8D and 8E) or "the gospel " (8B). In 8C, the speaker attempts to be more explicit in delineating the content of the instruction, yet still manages to use language that lies

within the province of jointly held, transcendent knowledge, specifically the phrase "ask Jesus into my heart. "

Extract 8

- A.** **“ And, uh, we had a, a junior church program that had like 50 - 100 kids. And uh, the, they had a specific youth, children’s pastor and *he came over one night and visited me* and, you know, you know *shared with me the plan of salvation.* And, you know, and then I said, ‘Oh that’s why all them people are always going up the aisle, you know. I was wondering what they are doing. And he explained to me, you know, that you know, once you accept him into your heart, you know, then not only does He become this big, you know God, you know, sitting up in heaven staring down at you, but He becomes a personal friend to you and you know and a Father.**
- B.** **And we just went to this church where this guy was preaching because he was going to do our wedding for us and we wanted to be polite and go to his church. So we went there and they were having revival that week. And we heard the gospel preached. And it was amazing ‘cause in church everybody was talking and laughing and carrying on and so much alive, you know, and. We couldn’t get over that.**
- C.** **“ And, uh, and so that next week, I went to his office and he shared with me, you know, one on one, uh, that I needed to ask Jesus into my heart and ask him to forgive my sins.**
- D.** **“ Otis Jackson was the pastor there. And all those questions that I had asked those Catholic priests, in four sermons that man answered. I had**

never been told that Jesus was going to come again for me. I had never been told that through the blood of Jesus I would be righteous. I had never been told that I had a hope that I could get to heaven without having to work for it, 'cause I was always taught you gotta be good, you gotta do this, you gotta do that. And I knew I never could meet the standard. *But Bro. Otis came over and sat down with me* and all those questions I had, he answered. And then, *he laid out the plan of salvation* and it was there - and it was a free gift of God - something nobody had ever told me before.

- E. And my best friend said, "I know what he wants you to do; he wants you to get saved." And I said, "From what?" And you know, you know, you hear all those terms 'get saved' 'born again' and I never understood them. So, uh, come to find out my best friend who had been my best friend for years, walked up the aisle when she was twelve, but she never told me that. And so, uh, I went to his Dad's office and he explained the plan of salvation.

Another salient feature of most of these examples concerns the speakers' indications that someone gave them personal attention in the sharing of a plan of salvation. In A, the speaker notes that the children's pastor visited her at her house (an informal and personal setting) and *shared* (a word used frequently in this context and which can be said to focus on commonality and solidarity) the plan of salvation. In C, the speaker more specifically describes the personal aspect of the instruction with the phrase "one on one," and in E uses the lexical item "office" to suggest a "one to one" private situation for the explanation of the salvation process. In D, the speaker

likewise marks the personal nature of the experience with the phrase “Bro. Otis came over and sat down with me,” which focuses again on the “one to one” nature of the event. Also, in this particular example, the speaker can be said to attempt to transform her contribution at one point into something more akin to the sermon event, than the oral testimony. This is indicated by the semantic layering technique (see chapter 2) employed in lines 2 - 7, and taking the form “I had never been told that.” This use of layering can be said to set the stage, creating anticipation for the climax of the instruction section, instantiated in lines 8 and 9. Such an attempt by the speaker at transformation of the speech event and the elaborated dramatization, while potentially evidence for the speaker’s accomplished performance, is nonetheless a risky strategy, as it can be viewed as “preaching” rather than “sharing one’s experience,” in which case the speaker could be interpreted as laying claim to a role for herself that is not appropriate for her given the context at hand.

3.7 Conversion

This section is the climax of the testimony narrative and is used by the speaker to describe the specific moment at which conversion took place. This episode is similar to what Longacre (1983) calls “peak,” specifically “any episode-like unit set apart by special surface structure features and corresponding to the Climax..”(24). The dramatic quality of the testimony finds its most vivid expression here and the speaker employs an elaborate array of linguistic devices to mark it. This section is marked by speakers’ use of deixis, via choice of verbs to mark perspective on the event and the assignment of agency to mark the dual realities at play in the dramatization, specifically the reality of speaker as DOER(agent of action) and the reality of speaker

as SEEKER (patient). The speakers demonstrate variability in the way in which they mark the agent/patient roles and make use of deixis via their choice of verbs. The roles tend to shift back and forth, as does the deictic marking of movement toward or away from speaker, giving this section an enhanced sense of drama as multiple characters take the stage to act out the event.

In the extracts that follow, the conversion event is marked by references to both concrete physical action on the part of the speaker as well as the specific intervention of God.

Extract 9

So that night I did and the next morning, you know, I- I walked the aisle. And then the Sunday after that was Easter Sunday and I was baptized. And I remember, I still remember of course uh, I mean I was only nine so I didn't you know, there was still a lot that I didn't realize I was doing. But I still remember when I told the Pastor that Sunday morning that I went up, I said, I told him I said, "I 've asked Jesus to come into my heart and I want to be a member of the church."

In extract 9, the speaker indicates movement away from the speaker and assigns agency to self ("I walked the aisle"), followed by a shift in agency ("I was baptized"), casting the speaker in the role of patient. Subsequently, in the phrases "I told God" and "I went up" the speaker marks another shift in roles, bringing self as agent back to the stage, so to speak. Following this, the rather common phrase "I've asked Jesus to come into my heart" instantiates both roles in one utterance: as one who "asked Jesus" the speaker marks self as agent, whereas the action of Jesus coming "into my heart" calls up the role of speaker as patient, assigning agency to Jesus, as can be represented

in the structure [I(agent) asked Jesus(patient)][Jesus(agent) come into my(patient) heart].

Likewise, in extract 10, the speaker casts himself as agent in the phrases “I knelt in his office,” “I asked Jesus” and “I came up and made a commitment,” whereas self as patient takes the stage in the phrases “(Jesus) come into my heart”(Jesus as agent), “He saved me”(God or Jesus as agent) and “I was baptized”(unknown agent, although generally assumed to be the pastor.)

Extract 10

And so I knelt in his office and asked Jesus to come into my heart. And He saved me and, uh. We were in revival that week and that was a Friday and that night I came up and made a personal commitment and I was baptized in the church. "

This creation of dual speaker roles (Doer and Seeker) and the coordinate linguistic marking of the roles in the dramatization, will be discussed in greater detail in section 3.13 relative to the performance aspects of the oral testimony.

3.8 Wrap Up

In this section the speaker completes his testimony and attempts to bring the past experience up to date, i.e. to let the listener know that there has been some kind of connection between the conversion event in the past and the coding time of the testimony speaking event. The speaker employs a number of possible devices that serve to mark this section, among them the use of temporally deictic transition phrases such as "and then", the use of the perfect form of BE (has been, have been),

temporally deictic modifiers such as "today, recently, and last," and, in some cases, a shift from past or perfect tense to the present tense. In extract 11, the speaker uses the discourse marker "and" with the present perfect form of BE ("it's just been") to mark a transition from the past event being described to the CT of the present.

Extract 11

And it's just been - that peace has been there, that hope has been there, that contentment. The Word of God was not just a scary book anymore, it became real. And Jesus became real and something else in it amazed me: all my life I had this picture of Jesus was stuck on a cross. And that, that was all he did. And he wasn't anything else, He was just that once for all sacrifice and that was it. But the Bible showed me how Christ came off that cross and he came to live in me. And that just made all the difference in the world.

Notice the use of the word "anymore" by the speaker, implying that at some point in remote past (i.e. prior to the past time conversion event) the Word of God was a "scary book," but that at the point immediately after conversion it no longer is "anymore." The word "anymore" can be said to be a word that is a negative polarity item, an adverb, and the opposite of "still." Thus, the semantics of the word relate to something having "continuity" for a period of time (in this case in the past) and that continuity being broken. As such, even when it is used in conjunction with a past time event (conversion), the condition it describes continues to the present, so that not only did the Word of God cease to be a "scary book" immediately after conversion, but it continues to not be a scary book at CT.

Notice also that this speaker can be said to craft a particularly elaborate rhetorical discourse with her attempt at transforming her oral testimony into something with sermon-like features. First of all, she makes use of semantic layering in the phrases “that peace has been there, that hope has been there, that contentment.” Secondly, she attempts to manipulate metaphor, in this case an image of the ornamental crucifixes picturing Jesus on a cross, which were an unquestionably familiar experience of her originally Roman Catholic background (“all my life I had this picture of Jesus was stuck on a cross”). As a final climax to her testimony, the speaker focuses on the dichotomy of pre-conversion and post-conversion by picturing them metaphorically as represented by “Christ on the cross” (pre-conversion) and Christ coming off that cross and coming to “live in me.” Finally, she makes use of a closing phrase, familiar at one level for its cliché meaning (And that just made all the difference in the world), but perhaps also capturing another perspective: that Christ is seen as not simply a static image of sacrifice (“on the cross”) but is active and existing in the secular and everyday reality of the speaker (“in the world”).

In extract 12, the speaker uses the temporal transition phrase “and then” to mark movement forward in time from the past conversion event to a point in time closer to CT when the speaker and her boyfriend “got together.” Furthermore, the speaker uses the discourse deictic “that” to anaphorically refer to the previously mentioned past point in time and to mark that this point in time is the end of discourse dealing with past time. Subsequently, the speaker uses the deictic modifier “then” to anaphorically refer back to this specific point in time that marks the end of past time in the discourse and related to that point to the speaker’s point in time at CT. In concert with this

deictic term is the speaker's shift from past tense to present perfect ("I have grown") to further mark the transition to the present.

Extract 12

And then we got together. And that was it. And I've grown since then.

In extract 13, the speaker uses the transition marker "and", along with a shift from the past tense ("was young") to the present ("I can see") and, furthermore, completes the marking of his shift in perspective with the anaphoric use of the discourse deictic term "that" to refer to the specific point in past time when the speaker was young. The speaker then shifts back to past tense in order to further emphasize and characterize events in the past event, relative to his perspective at CT. Following this, the speaker again uses the transition marker "and" along with a deictic modifier "even today" and a shift to present tense (I have to surrender, ask, etc.) to clearly mark movement in discourse from discussion of the past event to discourse reflecting CT.

Extract 13

And, uh, you know, I was young and, uh, I can see after that, that the Lord made a change in my life, 'cause I always had a bad temper when I was young - I used to get in fights on the football field everyday. And, uh, after that I don't know - I was just a little bit mellow and, you know, wasn't as bad. But, I still had problems even coming up through high school, and it wasn't until I really got into the fullness of Christ - you know just turning everything over to Him, that the Lord started working and, and bringing out these things that I needed to change. And even today, that's an area that I have to just continually surrender parts of my life to Him, and ask Him to just take control of me, you know, 'cause I

can't handle it. And so, you know, it's just a daily walk. And, like the Bible says, to work out your own salvation, you know, and that's what I believe the Lord's doing with me today - continuing to work it out."

In extract 14, the speaker makes extensive use of tense shift to bring the discourse to present CT and, thus, bring closure to the testimony. It is this shifting of tense in a discourse that has, heretofore, been marked by reference to past events that most clearly marks this section of the discourse as a "wrap up." In this wrap up the speaker attempts to use linguistic devices (tense shift and deictic modifiers) to draw a timeline of events in the past, more detailed than simply the single past conversion event dominating the discourse thus far.

Extract 14

It occurred to me recently, uh, that as I accepted the call to, to full-time ministry, even with all the questions I had, uhm, before the ordination last Fall, Bro. Rodney asked me to, to put some things down on paper, you know, to organize my testimony. And so I started thinking of all the things that had happened in my life and I wrote it - a bar graph on a piece of paper. I taped three pieces of paper together and I drew a line down the middle. And I divided it up into thirty little marks for each year of my life. And then I plotted on that graph significant events in my life, you know, when I moved to the new school, and when I got my first job and things like that. And there was an amazing pattern that developed of numbers, you know. Seven years from this point to this point. Seven years from this point to this point. And, I put on there the day that I told God I would surrender to the ministry. And that was when I stood on the

levee and I was listening to Charles Stanley on the radio and it was November the first, 1990. Ten years to the day from when I sang that song leaving home, you know. And it's just amazing to, I mean, it might not mean anything to anybody else, but to me it's just - I don't know if it's God confirming in me, or what, but, uh. Numbers, you know, really get my attention sometimes. So, that's how I guess that how I feel so confident about the ministry.

Having already located the past conversion event on the imaginary timeline, he then proceeds to make reference to a point in time very near CT in which he recalled some key events. This point in time is marked by the adverb "recently." Having added this point in time to the timeline, he then uses past tense (I accepted) to mark a point in time subsequent to the conversion event, but prior to the recalling event, in which he "accepted the call to the ministry." Next, the speaker marks another point in time ("before") subsequent to the point at which he "accepted the call to ministry", but prior to another specific point in time, "the ordination," which is located on the timeline by means of definite reference (the). In order to be more specific, and to foreshadow the next event to be located, the speaker uses the discourse modifier "last fall" to more clearly locate the point in time, prior to "the ordination" in which he was asked to "put some things down on paper." At this point, the speaker is ready to locate a final important point in the past that he will subsequently elaborate in the discourse that follows, and a point, which apparently is crucial to his being able to bring the testimony discourse to the present CT. This final point in the past is located subsequent to the point marked "last fall" and prior to the event marked "ordination." The speaker marks this point with a transition phrase "and so" that indicates he has

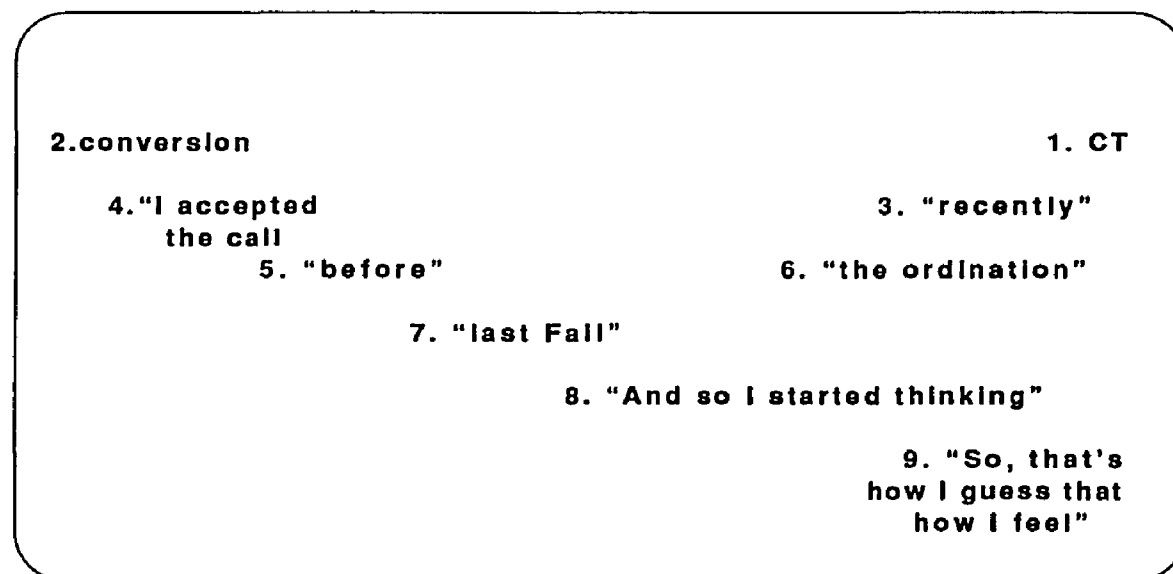


FIGURE 8: IMAGINARY TIMELINE: SPEAKER J

moved forward from the previous point to the current one, i.e. the point at which he "started thinking."

Thus, the speaker, from the perspective of CT (see Figure 8), has, through most of the discourse, marked the past conversion event(2) and subsequently locates this series of other past events(3 - 7) on an imaginary timeline, working from the remoteness of the past conversion event and the present CT to a point (8)somewhere in the middle, from which the speaker seemingly will be able to make a clear transition in the discourse to CT(9).

In extract 15, the speaker uses the transition marker "and" along with the marking of a point in time in the past, subsequent to conversion and prior to CT, specifically "the time Dickie and I started dating." Since this is a point in time in the past, the past tense is used. Once this point is located, the speaker then makes some elaborated comments on its significance before moving forward in time toward the CT with the

marking of a subsequent period of time, that includes CT, with a temporally deictic adverbial phrase ("the last six years"). Notice that once this adverbial has been employed to mark the period of time in question, the speaker marks it as inclusive of CT with the use of perfect tense ("I've realized"), which indicates that the activity (realization) occurred at some point within that time span and remains at present CT. Thus, the speaker has accomplished a wrap up of the testimony with a shift to CT.

Extract 15

And I knew without a shadow of a doubt that he, that, you know, that he was, he was the right one. And from, and from the time Dickie and I started dating, uhm, is when I finally started to realize once again, you know, that He, you know, He, that God wasn't the only, you know, sitting up there in heaven staring down at me, but that He was a personal friend. And its just been in the last six years that I've realized, you know, come to understand that personal relationship that you can have with Him, you know. And, your (directed to T) testimony that you shared Layperson's Day about, you know, all you want to be is a worshiper,has just been a big influence to me, because, you know, you, you know the world's out there doing so many things, you know, when all I want to do is put a tape in and just worship, because that, that has become a central focus in my life, is just to be a worshiper and just to be a servant to Him. "

In extract 16, the speaker employs a transition marker ("and") and the deictic modifier "this day," along with a shift from past tense to present tense ("I still have some battles"), and, for greater emphasis, the adverb "still," which in this case indicates the durative nature of the speaker's "battles" from past to present. Thus, like

the others, this speaker has accomplished a shift to present CT and in so doing, achieved a "wrap up" of his testimony discourse.

Extract 16

Of course, it's all symbolic, but I, but I felt as though I needed to be washed. And I talked to, to the pastor about it and he said, "No," says, "you've been baptized once," says, uh, "you don't need to do it again." And so this - even to this day I still have some battles within me about that. But anyway, uh, from that point on, that point on I've - I've, uh, I've grown spiritually. Some of the things that I thought I would never, never see and understand I can see and understand now. And I can look back over my life and like I said, see God's hand of, of mercy and grace over me while I was, was like a sheep, you know, in, in the wilderness, lost."

The speakers, then, use a variety of mechanisms , such as discourse transition markers, deictic modifiers, tense shifting, and, in some cases, elaborate timelining of a series of past events that are necessary for effective transition from discourse focused on past time to present CT and, thus, a "wrap up" or closure of the testimony discourse. These six (6) components of the testimony are almost all present in the general structure of each testimony. Specifically, the Orientation, Exposure, Conversion and Wrap-Up sections are found in all (100%) of the testimonies. The remaining two sections (Conviction and Instruction) are found in five out of the six, or 83% of the time.

These testimonies have not yet become ritualized but, as these components illustrate, it may be on its way to doing so. Additionally, the components tend to

follow some sequence, although there is variability. For example, all the testimonies begin with the Orientation sections and contain the Wrap Up at the end, as might be expected. In five out of the six, the Exposure section follows after the Orientation, while the sixth one places Conviction second. The speaker at this point has some flexibility in deciding what elements will be included and in how he will order the sequence of his testimony. Conviction, Conversion, Exposure and Instruction are manipulated irregularly (see Figure 9).

3.9 Performance Features: Structural Staging

As previously mentioned, I have discussed the structure of the oral testimony (or the “scenes” in this drama) and will turn now to a discussion of aspects of the

A	B	C	D	E	F
Orientation	Orientation	Orientation	Orientation	Orientation	Orientation
Exposure	Exposure	Exposure	Exposure	Exposure	Conviction
-----	Conviction	Conviction	Conviction	Conviction	Exposure
Instruction	Instruction	-----	Instruction	Instruction	Instruction
Conversion	Conversion	Conversion	Conversion	Conversion	Conversion
Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up

**FIGURE 9: SEQUENCING OF ORAL TESTIMONY
STRUCTURAL UNITS**

discourse relative to the performance of the oral testimony, specifically “staging,” constructed dialogue and the speakers’ creation of personas (or characters) to act out the drama.

One of the most salient features of this dramatization is the use of what Brown and Yule(1983) call "staging," which describes a situation in which "...a specific setting or frame of reference is established as background in order that a particular topical contribution can be given warranted prominence in the foreground" (Yule & Mathis, 1990:6). One quite common form of "staging" can involve the evocation of a frame (Tannen, 1979; Levinson, 1983:281) which is defined as "...a body of knowledge that is evoked in order to provide an inferential base for the understanding of an utterance" (Levinson, 1983:281). This analysis will utilize this concept of staging, "not as a technical term, but as a general metaphor" (Brown & Yule, 1983:134) wherein speakers evoke, through a variety of mechanisms, frames or "background knowledge" against which the foregrounded information is to be interpreted and understood. In the testimonies representative of this speech community, the speakers stage their dramas against a backdrop of shared knowledge provided by two sources: the linear structure of the discourse and specific elements in the text.

This first type of staging I will call "structural staging," because it concerns how the linear organization of the discourse is manipulated to bring certain elements into greater prominence. We have already discussed the sections of the testimony discourse, beginning with the orientation, followed by exposure, conviction, instruction and leading then to the climactic (and thus most prominent) section of the testimony, the conversion. Thus, iconically, these first sections, as left-most

"constituents" in a linearly structured discourse, become backgrounded knowledge and subsequently focus attention on the more prominent, right-most sections, specifically the conversion and wrap-up. Even within the sections, the structuring can be manipulated to iconically background certain elements in order to foreground others. For example, in the wrap-up section, the speaker in extract 14 backgrounds a series of past time events by locating them on an imaginary timeline, through tense shifting, deictic modifiers, and transition markers, such that attention is drawn to a final past event which the speaker subsequently elaborates and from which he makes a transition to present coding time to conclude the discourse.

3.10 Textual Staging

In addition to these kinds of structural staging, the speaker also employs what I will call textual staging, background knowledge that results from reference to "shared transcendent knowledge" (Demarest, 1975) which is jointly held by the speaker and audience and which is not explained in the discourse. This kind of backgrounding takes the form of ritualized phrases which, for the community members, evoke complex images and experiences that inform the discourse. There are a large number of such phrases, some more cryptic than others, but all, to some degree, within the province of shared community knowledge that is not available to the uninformed except through the "... careful following of certain procedures and through the aid of specific sources" (Demarest, 1975:2). I will review several of these ritualized phrases as mechanisms of textual staging.

A. The Plan of Salvation

And, uh, the, they had a specific youth, children's pastor and he came over one night and visited me and, you know, you know, shared with me *the plan of salvation*.

This phrase is perhaps one of the most familiar and most ritualized of all that appear in the testimonies. In fact, half of the speakers recorded used this particular phrase. The phrase represents a body of knowledge which, though variable in its specific details (such as choice of Scripture references), follows a rather fixed structure and explains the basic steps to the conversion experience. This "plan" finds written expression in a variety of pamphlets ("How to Have a Full and Meaningful Life," "The Four Spiritual Laws," "The Roman Road," to name a few) and other materials, none of which is officially sanctioned, but all of which follow the basic structure. This "plan" is generally formally presented to those persons interested in experiencing conversion, either at their home, the pastor's office, or "on the spot", so to speak, at the end of the worship service, in response to a call from the pastor for those who wish to make such a decision to proceed to the altar area of the church. "Sharing" is one of the most common terms for transaction of information used in this community: members "share the gospel" and "share their testimonies", for example. When this term is used (in contrast to a term like "give" or "deliver"), it can be said to mark an attempt by the speaker to emphasize his or her solidarity with another participant or group, in this specific case the speaker's solidarity with the children's pastor.

B. The Invitation Was Given

Bro. Rodney was preaching. I didn't remember really anything he said, but when *the invitation* was given, I just felt the Spirit come on me..

The "invitation" is the term for the portion of the worship service , at the end of the sermon, when the pastor formally "invites" or instructs members of the congregation to proceed to the altar area of the church to make specific, public decisions about their relationship with Christ, or to pray with the pastor regarding some problem. The following is a sample of a typical invitation from one of the sermons:

Extract 17

(music begins) Now I want everyone of you right now just to say that - you don't have to say it, uh, shoutingly, but just, just say it. Uh, "Lord be it unto me according to Thy word....." Now I ask you this morning if you need to make that decision public, you come let us pray with you and let's affirm and agree together the word. Jesus said that where two or more would be in agreement with His word they could have whatever they asked for. I'll agree with you, and you come and tell me what, what God's saying to you today. (pause) All right, let's stand together now. And let's let the power of the Holy Spirit right now in our lives drawing us to, to the word of God to make the decision that we need to make. Okay. Let's sing now, please. You come

This phrase is ritualized to the point that it appears in formal, written programs that outline each worship service and, furthermore, it serves as a descriptive term for the music that is typically played during this time, i.e. "invitation music." It is a portion of the worship service that is considered all but necessary and is omitted only under the most unusual of circumstances, and then usually with the authority of "the leading of the Lord."

C. The Sinner's Prayer

I've heard people say about their testimonies, you know, you know, and, and Satan uses it all the time, you know, about that if the pastor don't lead, lead you in *the sinner's prayer*, and all of this, this, this, this, you know - if that don't happen while you're at the front of the church, then, you know, you never got saved."

As with "the plan of salvation," the "sinner's prayer" is a ritualized term for a very specific type of prayer in which the person experiencing conversion is lead through a "repeat-after-me" prayer formally asking for forgiveness and petitioning Christ to come and live in their hearts. There is a wide range of possibility for manipulation of the details of the prayer, but certain basic elements are required, namely some sort of acknowledgement of one's sinful condition, a petition for forgiveness, and a formal petition asking "Jesus to come into one's heart."

D. Rededicating One's Life

And we went down the aisle together, her and I. She went accepting Christ as her Savior and I went *rededicating my life*, because I knew I was wrong, I knew I was out of God's will.

“Rededicating one’s life” is a frequent spiritual experience for members of this congregation, signifying almost a second conversion experience in which, for some reason, a person perceives he or she has relapsed into a spiritual condition that is unsatisfactory, and subsequently repeats much of what he or she did when he was originally converted, i.e. making a public decision at the altar, praying a prayer similar in form to the “sinner’s prayer,” etc. It seems to be quite common that members of this community experience what they call conversion at a very young age (as some of the testimonies attest to) but subsequently suffer a relapse or sorts, identified by terms such as “backslidden”, “fallen from grace,” “fallen away from the Lord,” and such. The only real remedy, in fact the expectation for such a condition is repentance and the “rededicating of one’s life,” which, like conversion, should be expressed publicly at some point. Because the theology of the community dictates that once one is converted he can never actually “lose” that salvation (this is called the “Once Saved/Always Saved doctrine and is one of the doctrinal features that distinguishes Southern Baptists from other evangelical and fundamentalist groups), the rededication cannot be considered a second conversion. Rather, it is a mechanism by which wayward members can rectify their situation formally and obtain a second chance at faithfulness. The experience is considered important enough that it should only be legitimately done once (like conversion) and those who make a regular practice of professing this experience lose credibility within the group. A related metaphor that describes a similar, but more frequently allowed experience of personal spiritual renewal is simply called “getting right with God,” which can apply to the rededication experience, but infers much broader possibilities.

E. Hearing the Gospel Preached

So we went back a second week and begin to *hear the gospel* and realize we were somebody and God loved us and cared for us, and...

Like the "plan of salvation", the term "the gospel" refers to a specific body of knowledge, the details of which can vary widely, but which also adheres to a basic structure. The "gospel" or the "gospel message," as it is sometimes called, can be summed up in a few words or Scriptures or it can serve as the theme of an entire sermon. The term is not inclusive of any one community, but its meaning is peculiar to the religious community who uses it. In this case, "the gospel" refers to a set of specific doctrines that expounds the major points necessary for understanding intelligently enough to make a decision to convert, specifically the Deity of Christ, His substitutionary/propitiary death on the cross, His resurrection, ascension and second coming, etc. The "gospel," then, is the canon of official dogma for this community and the preaching or believing of anything contrary to it is considered heresy.

F. Having Revival

So we went there and they were *having revival* that week. And we heard the gospel preached.

The term "revival" generally denotes some kind of spiritual renewal, usually corporate in nature, but not limited to this. However, in the context of the extract above, the term "revival" refers to a specific event, usually annual, in which a visiting preacher, and sometimes a guest musician, lead services every night for a week or several days, with the general purpose of bringing renewal to the members and evangelizing (or converting) those outsiders who are "lost." Whether these results obtain does not change the designation of the event. It is usually during the revivals

that many of the members make "rededications" of their lives to Christ, and outsiders join the community through conversion. The conversion of those outside the community occurs more often during the revivals than it does in regular worship services, when it is primarily the children of members who are initiated into the spiritual community through conversion, or what may be called in such cases a "profession of faith."

G. The Call to Full-Time Ministry

It occurred to me recently, uh, that as I accepted the call to, to full-time ministry, even with all the questions I had, uhm, before the ordination last Fall...."

Hearing and receiving (or surrendering to) the "call of God" to ministry is another very specific, but more exclusive spiritual experience within the community. Many members will make reference to God's speaking to them or calling them to specific tasks, but the call to the ministry is unique. The "call" experience can occur in very dramatic or very subtle ways, but either way is necessary in order for someone to be formally accepted and ordained as a minister. No evidence for this experience is required, but the individual must be able to sufficiently recount the event to a group of other ordained men who pass judgment on its validity; rarely are individuals rejected.

H. Agreement with God or God's Word

Now when we speak that word in agreement with God, we're born again. The term "agreement" when used in this kind of context, resembles the idea of submission and acquiescence more than it does the notion of a mutual, negotiated

accord. Agreement with God or God's Word is taken to mean a surrender of one's own ideas to the dictates of the Deity. It is not considered a legitimate option in this community to disagree with God.

I. Convict

And God began to convict me and, and bring within me a desire to, to draw closer to Him.

The term "conviction" describes the intense emotional feeling one feels related to a perceived need for some kind of experience with God, who is marked as the agent of the conviction. God is seen as bringing to bear upon the patient some kind of inward pressure, often said to be the result of inner feelings or God's "inner" speaking, in which case the patient is described as being "under conviction" or being "dealt with" by God. The result of this conviction is the patient's acceptance of a perceived state of spiritual deficiency which can only be satisfied by some specific physical/concrete response. Although this term is consistently used in the context of one's initial conversion experience, it finds wide use as a term to describe any situation in which a person feels compelled toward a sacred experience with corresponding physical action (e.g. praying, confessing sin, going to the altar, evangelizing an unbeliever, etc.).

As already mentioned, these are but a few of the many such ritualized phrases that represent "shared transcendent knowledge" which is jointly held by the speaker and audience but which is not explicated in the discourse. These examples of textual staging evoke complex images and experiences for the audience, and, along with structural staging, inform the discourse and make possible the recognition and interpretation of foregrounded material.

3.11 Constructed Dialogue

Another salient feature relative to the performance of the oral testimony drama is the speakers' use of constructed dialogue. As with the sermon data, the testimonies likewise provide opportunity for the speakers to creatively construct an oral narrative dramatizing an important event and featuring the dramaturgical constructed dialogue mechanism. In addition, with the inclusion of this "creative, transforming move" (Tannen, 1989) as part of their dramatized testimonies, the speakers are employing a discourse tactic that elicits active participation by the audience in the interpretation of meaning.

It was noted in the analysis of the sermon data that the taxonomy of constructed dialogue types that appeared in those samples included dialogue as a reconstruction of real, past events, dialogue as instantiation, dialogue eliciting audience response, dialogue as inner speech, dialogue as creating a sequence of events, and dialogue dramatizing Scripture. Most of the speakers make use of some of these types of constructed dialogue to some degree and, in most cases, the constructed dialogue is the re-creation of real, past time events, rather than hypothetical ones. In almost every case of constructed dialogue, the speakers attribute the dialogue they construct to principals in the conversion event. Some of these characters include a child's mother (extract 17), a pastor (extract 18), one speaker's twin brother (extract 19) and God (extract 20). It is this particular type of constructed dialogue that adds a new dimension to our previously elaborated taxonomy of constructed dialogue types and the one on which I will focus brief analysis in this section.

Extract 17

And then we prayed and she said, "I want you to talk with Bro. Rodney before you go up."

Extract 18

And, uh, the, they had a specific youth, children's pastor and he came over one night and....shared with me the plan of salvation. And, you know, and then I said, 'Oh that's, that's why all them people are always going up the aisle, you know, I was wondering what they are doing.' And he explained to me.....The next Sunday morning, you know, I asked him, I said, "All I have to do is, is ask him to come into my heart, you know? And, and then I'm saved, you know, and go to heaven?" And he said, 'Yeah, you know, that's , that's all you have to do.'

Extract 19

And I can remember Donald and I talking, you know, sharing with each other, saying, 'You know, ' said, uh, 'they're going to heaven and we ain't, you know. God's gonna make a way for them and we're going to be left, you know, if we don't get our lives straightened out.'

Notice in extract 19 that the dialogue constructed is a summary of the interchange between the speaker and his brother and, as such, is an example of what Tannen (1989:113) calls choral dialogue, specifically "dialogue offered as an instantiation of what many people said," in this case, two.

Extract 20 offers an example of constructed dialogue which, like the others, is attributed to a principal involved in the conversion event, but one significantly

different from the others: God. Because the members of this community believe in the reality of God and His physical, albeit invisible presence in their daily lives (in surroundings, events, thoughts, etc.), it is not uncommon for them to treat Him as a character as real and as capable of attributed speech, or of being the recipient of such, as any other. In this excerpt, the speaker indicates that God is a listener and implies, further, that He can also be a speaker, but chooses not to do so in this case. In this context, the speaker re-creates his words to God through constructed dialogue. His use of the present participial form "saying" to introduce the constructed dialogue, implies that these words instantiate (rather than represent) the gist of what was, most likely, the speaker's inner thoughts directed to God.

Extract 20

And so I can remember going to church that Sunday morning and, and sitting there saying, 'Well, God, I'm just waiting for you to speak, you know, I'm waiting to hear. God are you calling me?' And another Sunday would pass and I just really didn't feel anything, I didn't feel God calling me.

In one other example (extract 21) of this kind of constructed dialogue, the same speaker uses this mechanism to instantiate an inner thought that would conceivably never have taken place, due to its sarcastic quality. Notice that this dialogue is not introduced by any kind of quotative, perhaps signaling the fact that this dialogue never actually happened and would be so remote a possibility of ever happening as to be perceived as impossible. The speaker attempts to describe an unacceptable spiritual condition by proposing that he thought or said something that took the form of asking God's permission to do so.

Extract 21

I began to not look at just today and - that's what I was living, I was living just, "L-Lord just let me have as much fun as I can have today, you know, and then I'll worry about tomorrow later."

Thus, the speaker adds an extra bit of complexity to the constructed dialogue technique in order to more dramatically emphasize what is basically a simple statement.

3.12 The Creation of Dual Personas to Reflect Dual Realities

The oral testimonies have been described within the framework of dramatized verbal performance, in which the speaker creates rather than recounts an experience, resulting in an enactment (Abrahams, 1978) in which speaker and audience experience a transcendence reminiscent of the original conversion event being dramatized. It has been proposed that the speakers create this drama through techniques such as structural and textual staging (in order to evoke background knowledge that informs the discourse and provide a backdrop against which the foregrounded material can be interpreted), and constructed dialogue that provides script for the characters that will help focus and emphasize a point. Finally, this section will offer an evaluation of the characterizations used by the speakers to populate the dramas and how these characterizations instantiate the interplay of the dichotomous worlds of reality governing this transcendent experience.

As has been noted, there exists for this community, not only the reality of the everyday, common-sense secular world, but a transcendent, metaphysical reality, the sacred , that is inaccessible to the outsider, but one that is jointly held by the members

by virtue of shared experience and participation in that reality, such as in the conversion event described in the testimonies. These two worlds of reality are antithetical to each other (the secular reality is finite, empirical and sensorially perceived, whereas the sacred reality is infinite, transcendent and supernatural), but interdependent on one another for meaning. For example, the secular world of reality is really only meaningful for this community in terms of its assignment as a manifestation of the divine truth through the interpretive lens of the sacred world.

In the dramatization of the conversion event, the speakers reflect these two worlds of reality by drawing upon several dichotomous distinctions in which to make this perspective, such that the experiences of the speaker are cast in terms that are both physical and abstract, public and private, active and mental. By doing this, the speaker suggests in his drama the interdependent interplay of these two worlds that is necessary for conversion to take place, and reinforces the theological belief of the community, which holds that conversion is primarily a matter of God's initiative (sacred) but must also demonstrate activity on the part of the convert (secular) as well. This interplay of the two worlds of reality is marked linguistically through the speakers' use of deixis and the assignment of agency to create dual personas that characterize the distinctions being dramatized. These personas become the principal roles in the drama and are both acted by the speaker, who casts himself in either role depending upon how he wishes to mark which reality is in play. This flexibility for manipulation of the roles gives the testimony its creative flair and allows the speaker opportunity to create his own unique and personal drama.

The two possible personas evident in these testimonies are what can be termed "The Seeker" and "The Doer." The "Seeker" is "on stage" in the drama when the

emphasis is on the speakers' passive search for and reception of salvation, whereas the "Doer" presents a perspective in which the speaker actively pursues conversion.

Deixis is employed, through verb selection, to mark these personas by treating the event they enact as a transaction and as involving movement of some kind. Movement for the Seeker is movement toward the speaker and in the case of the Doer, movement away from speaker, the most common lexical items used to mark this distinction being the verbs *go* and *come*, or appropriate synonyms. Verbs that indicate transaction are also used to mark these personas, relative to the conversion event, most notably the verbs *give* and *receive*, or appropriate synonyms.

In addition to this use of deixis, the speaker also has the option to make choices relative to the assignment of agency in order to mark which world of reality is in focus in the event. When the speaker marks himself as agent, he emphasizes the Doer's perspective on the conversion event. Conversely, the speaker's suspension of self as agent and the assignment thereof to some other entity in the event marks the perspective of the Seeker who transcends the secular, everyday reality and enters the province of the sacred wherein he is transformed.

The duality of the roles in these oral testimonies is reminiscent of the dual roles of the pastor in the sermon event, which pressure him to mediate between the exertion of God-like authority on the one hand, and the experience of solidarity with the congregation on the other. Although it is not a neat fit, it could be argued that the Seeker role in the oral testimony, with its emphasis on a participant's receptive posture relative to God's action, is similar to the role of the pastor that emphasizes his solidarity with the congregation as a receiver (or patient) of the activity (i.e. speaking) of God. conversely, the Doer role in the oral testimony, with its emphasis on the

speaker as an agent of action toward God is roughly analagous to the pastor's role as authoritative representative of God and his consequent position as agent of the activity (i.e. delivering God's message) received by the congregation. However, this comparison can only be imprecisely made, else there is a risk of drawing the kind of unreliable conclusions that result from comparing apples and oranges, so to speak. Suffice it to say that these two speech events suggest that speakers appear to mark a dichotomous perspective on events involving God and man, in which both are actively involved in creating the experience and both are brought to life and given agency through a set of dual roles assumed by the speakers in those events.

3.13 The Encoding of Doer and Seeker Personas

The speakers frequently manipulate both personas alternatively within their descriptions of an individual event (mostly the conversion event), breaking it into a sequence of smaller events, each of which is expressed from the perspective of a particular persona. The following are examples from the testimony data of instances in which the speaker chooses to manipulate the personas and the assignment of agency within the conversion narrative to dramatically underscore the dual realities at work in the experience. Each of the following examples follows a basic structure in which the speaker selects a verb that encodes the DOER perspective (i.e. movement away from speaker as agent) on one of the events in the larger conversion event. Subsequently, the speaker marks another connected event with the use of a verb encoding the SEEKER perspective (i.e. movement toward speaker as patient) and the reassignment of agency to someone other than self.

Extract 22

The next Sunday morning, you know, I asked him, I said, “All I have to do is *ask Him to come into my heart?*”

Extract 23

So I did that night and the next morning, you know, *I-I walked the aisle*. And then the Sunday after that was Easter Sunday and *I was baptized*.

In extract 24, the speaker employs the same strategy to dramatize his wife's conversion, but alters the structure to mark his activity strictly from the DOER perspective, with self as agency.

Extract 24

And we went down the aisle together, her and I. She went accepting Christ as her Savior, and I went rededicating my life....

The verb "accept" used here encodes a transfer in which there is movement toward speaker and implies that something was offered or given and someone, in this case Christ, was the agent of this transfer. However, the speaker dramatizes his experience by using the past tense form of GO (went) and the religious term "rededicate" to mark movement away from speaker and assigns agency to self. The term rededicate has the implication that something (affection, loyalty, etc) is begin transferred to someone else (Christ) and as such will be considered a verb with deictic elements that place it within the category of the DOER perspective.

There is no required order for the encoding (e.g. DOER first, then SEEKER) but the speaker is, instead, free to reverse it as in extract 25:

Extract 25

And, and then I'm saved, you know, and I go to heaven?

Here the speaker uses the frequently employed verb "saved" (a passive construction) which, since the understanding of the concept encoded is that salvation is something "received", implies God or Christ as agent, thus emphasizing the SEEKER persona. This is followed by the encoding of the DOER persona through the use of "go" and the assignment of agency to self.

In extract 26, we see the same pattern of presenting the SEEKER and DOER perspectives, but with the addition of the verb "need."

Extract 26

I went to his office and he shared with me, you know, one on one, uh, that I needed to ask Jesus into my heart and ask Him to forgive my sins."

In this case, the speaker marks his role as both DOER and SEEKER in the phrase "I needed to ask Jesus into my heart" and "ask Him to forgive my sins," which can be represented as "I need [I(agent) ask Jesus(patient)][Jesus(agent) into my(patient) heart]. The verb "need" indicates his perspective that in order to become a SEEKER one has to *do* something, i.e. "ask."

In extract 27, there is an example of a speaker's attempt to take the basic DOER/SEEKER structure and give it a more dramatic flair through the repetition of one perspective within the description of a sequence of events.

Extract 27

And so I knelt in his office and asked Jesus to come into my heart.

In this passage the speaker employs the phrase "ask Jesus to come into my heart," which is the encoding of first the DOER and then the SEEKER personas. Prior to this, however, he makes use of DOER perspective through the assignment of agency to self. His use of the verb "knelt", which does not specifically indicate movement away from speaker in the sense "go" does, nonetheless, because of the agency assigned to it, intuitively seems to belong to the DOER perspective.

In extract 28, the same speaker encodes the DOER persona with the unlikely use of what is normally a verb indicating movement toward speaker and, thus, belonging to the SEEKER perspective.

Extract 28

... and that night I came up and made a personal commitment and I was baptized in the church.

In order to accomplish the encoding of the DOER persona with a normally SEEKER verb (came), the speaker is actually using the verb to mark movement relative to something other than ego (i.e., front of the church) and is thus using deictic projection to place the deictic center at the altar so that he perceives himself as a seeker from the perspective of his goal. The same seeker role is assigned to the speaker in the agentless passive construction "was baptized."

In extract 29, the speaker gives us an example of how the same event can be dramatized from both the DOER and the SEEKER perspectives. The speaker describes a two-part event, God's call to him and his response, in two different points within the Wrap Up section of his narrative. At each point, he encodes God's call from

the SEEKER perspective, i.e. God is the agent and the verb "call" encodes movement toward speaker, more specifically "verbal transfer." However, in the first case he marks his response from the SEEKER perspective, encoding it with the use of the verb "accept", indicating movement (transfer) toward speaker and through the assignment of agency to God. However, in the second case, he uses the verb "surrender", which, like "give", implies movement away from speaker and, consequently, assigns agency to self.

Extract 29

(1) As I accepted the call to, to full-time ministry....

(2) And, I put on there the day that I told God I would surrender to the ministry...

3.14 The Assignment of Agency to God

In the following extracts are examples of the assignment of agency to God or Christ and, thus, the casting of the narrator at these points in the persona of SEEKER. In extract 30, the speaker marks three different events within the larger conversion event with passive constructions ("was given" and "I just felt") and the use of *come* (The Spirit come on me) to cast the himself in the role of patient, thus marking the perspective of SEEKER.

Extract 30

But when the invitation *was given*, I just *felt* the Spirit *come on me* . .

With the use of the passive form of "give" the speaker marks movement (transfer) toward speaker and assigns agency to the giver of the invitation, who, in this case, is God through the channel of the pastor. The speaker then presents a two-part event in

which he encodes the " Spirit coming on him " and his subsequent response ("felt"). The use of "come" encodes movement toward speaker and suggests the Spirit as agent, and the verb felt, while not specifically implying movement relative to speaker, emphasizes the reception of that action by the Spirit and, thus, encodes the SEEKER perspective [It could be argued that the case role assignment for the speaker in extract 30 is that of Experiencer due to the stative nature of the verb phrase *come on*. However, in this analysis, I am using the notion of agency in a broad sense to mark any attempt by the speaker to encode the DOER perspective, in contrast to that of SEEKER].

In extract 31, the speaker uses the past tense form of "come" and the clear assignment of agency to Christ, in order to encode the SEEKER perspective.

Extract 31

But the Bible showed me how Christ came off that cross and he came to live in me.

In extract 32, the speaker uses the verb "get" in an agentless passive construction, marking his perception that he has no control over the event (getting left) and is, thus, in the role of patient. He further notes that this situation can be alleviated by the speaker assuming the DOER role ("we get our lives straightened out"). With this use of "get" the speaker as agent is marked as taking the stage in the role of DOER.

Extract 32

God's gonna make a way for them and we're going to be left, you know, if we don't get our lives straightened out...

In extract 33, the speaker also makes use of this sense of "get", this time to denote a condition already achieved and, likewise, implying that the agent of the actions

leading to that condition was not the speaker, but someone else (God). Following this encoding of SEEKER perspective, the speaker, in keeping with a frequent pattern, encodes the DOER perspective, with the use of the compound verb "turn everything over to" and the assignment of agency to self. Finally, in his dramatization of this series of small events, the speaker makes use of an interesting construction to again encode the SEEKER persona. He uses the verb "bring out" which does not specifically indicate movement away from speaker in the same way the simpler verb "bring" would, but, nonetheless, intuitively seems, like "bring", to belong to the SEEKER category. Reinforcing the SEEKER perspective here is the obvious assignment of agency to "the Lord."

Extract 33

and it wasn't until I really got into the fullness of Christ, you know, turning everything over to Him, that the Lord started working and bringing out these things that I needed to change.

Similar to this is the following extract, in which another speaker uses a compound verb form with "bring" to encode the same kind of SEEKER perspective:

Extract 34

And God began to convict me and, and bring within me a desire to, to draw closer to Him.

In this case, the speaker uses the phrase "bring within me" to mean that an inward "desire" has been received by the speaker from some source other than self.

Furthermore, the speaker clearly assigns the agency, as in the other case, to "the Lord." In addition to this, the speaker uses the phrase "draw closer to Him" to indicate movement away from speaker, so that God is causing him to become a SEEKER and,

furthermore, the speaker assigns agency in this sentence to God, emphasizing that not only was the speaker's experience of inner conviction and desire the result of God's initiative, but the speaker's own active movement toward God was also not of his own volition.

3.15 Examples of Uncertain Agency

There are examples within the data wherein it is not completely clear who the agent of the action might be, but the implication is clear that it is not the speaker. In extract 35, the speaker describes his degeneration into an undesirable spiritual condition and uses the verb "reach" to encode this. While this verb frequently assigns agency to the speaker, in this case it does not necessarily do so, which is also the case in the phrase that follows it, regarding the "mountaintop experience" ("I *had* a mountaintop experience"):

Extract 35

It was during that time that *I reached* the lowest point in my life of real depression and loneliness and that was when *I had* the mountaintop experience where *I called out* to God and..."

The designation of the event as an "experience" gives us a clue that the speaker is encoding a SEEKER perspective, in which he was not the agent or source of this experience, but a recipient. Nonetheless, there is no clear implication as to who the agent might be, although we suspect that he attributes that to God. However, it is evident that the speaker casts himself in the role of DOER with assignment of agency to self in the phrase "I called out to God."

In extract 36, the verb "hear" clearly marks the speaker as recipient, hence not the DOER since someone or something other than self is agent, but the context does not

clearly specify who. In addition, the speaker notes that he "realized" something, a mental action that does not suggest speaker as agent but as SEEKER which is confirmed in the final two actions where the speaker is one of the patients receiving from God.

Extract 36

So we went back a second week and begin to hear the gospel and realize we were somebody and God loved us and cared for us..

In extract 37, the speaker makes use of the verb "became" to describe a change of spiritual conditions (conversion) which is ambiguous between a reading in which he actually did something or something happened to him. Therefore, he does not mark agency, but implies that the speaker does not receive that assignment.

Extract 37

and I became a Christian that day. And I was sixteen.

Therefore, because assignment is not marked specifically and the implication is that speaker is not agent, one must draw the conclusion that someone or something else receives that role assignment and thus, the speaker is placed in the role of a receiver of some kind, thus a SEEKER.

In extract 38, the speaker goes through an interesting attempt to hedge on the assignment of agency when it seems intuitively clear he believes himself to occupy that role, bearing responsibility for what is depicted as a dispreferred condition:.

Extract 38

And I became ashamed of my faith, not because Jesus was to be ashamed of, but because I was to be ashamed. And, so, it began to really bother me.

The phrase "became ashamed" emphasizes a process the end result of which is a state of being that is not valued in the community. The speaker's choice of a verb with indefinite agency (became) indicates an attempt to avoid such assignment, presumably because the speaker himself would be the prime candidate. He continues to dance around the issue with his subsequent use of a passive construction ("I was to be ashamed") which, again, avoids the assignment of agency to speaker, but nonetheless, makes the point, albeit less directly. However, with the phrase "it began to bother me," the speaker, in effect, makes himself a SEEKER, despite his initial ambivalence about his role. This particular extract represents an instance in which the speaker employs a hedging technique within the created narrative to deflect direct responsibility from himself, rather than an instance that is part of the larger dramatization through the encoding of DOER and SEEKER personas.

It has been proposed that speakers frequently manipulate both personas(SEEKER and DOER) alternatively within their dramatizations of individual events through choice of agency assignment and use of deixis. Speakers sometimes encode both personas within a series of related events or elect to encode only the SEEKER persona, chiefly through assignment of agency to God or avoidance of clear assignment altogether. While there are examples of two related events encoding the DOER persona only, the tendency is to encode SEEKER or the combination of the two.

3.16 The Testimony As A Rite of Passage

In this speech community the oral testimony of one's conversion experience describes the most important rite of passage for members of this community. It is

precisely this conversion experience that allows one membership not only in the "family of God" but also in the specific expression of that family that is the local church body. One of the interesting aspects of the data is the occasional reference to and linkage with marriage in four of the testimonies. In each case, the marriage experience in some way (either before or after) was related to the conversion experience, or in extract 39 a subsequent "rededication" experience, in which the speaker "drew closer to God." Marriage is, itself, a kind of rite of passage, although not necessarily one that is related to spiritual experience. However, in this community, marriage and the husband/wife relationship is imbued with strong spiritual significance and purpose. In fact, the marriage metaphor is used Biblically, and thus in the speech of the community, representing the spiritual/mystical union of Christ and the church. For example, in extract 39, the speaker makes a very strong connection between relationship with his wife and relationship with God. The experience, or impending experience of the marriage rite of passage apparently has an effect on the speaker's evaluation of his need for the conversion rite of passage to be reemphasized and/or reinforced:

Extract 39

I realized that I wanted her as my wife, I began not only to see that responsibility as a husband but also see that responsibility as a spiritual leader in our family. And God began to convict me and, and bring within me a desire to, to draw closer to Him.

This piece of data also reinforces the assertion that members of this community give spiritual significance to what outsiders would consider a secular relationship, i.e. marriage. Here the speaker characterizes his role as a husband in terms of "spiritual

leader," encoding , in yet another way, the interdependent interplay between the two worlds of reality (the secular and the sacred) by assigning two different referring expressions to one referent, i.e. the speaker himself. Thus he brings the perspective of the secular, everyday world to bear upon his experience by referring to himself in secular terms as "husband", and in sacred terms as "spiritual leader," marking a transcendence from the secular to the sacred and also marking the necessity of making sense of the secular through the interpretive lens of the sacred.

3.17 Conclusion

It has been proposed that oral testimonies are best described within the framework of dramatized verbal performance in which the speakers actively create experience and in which the speaker and audience share a transcendent experience, which, in turn, transforms and informs the world of the everyday and through which the everyday, secular reality is interpreted and assigned meaning. The previous analysis looked at the structure of the dramatized oral testimony as "scenes" or sequences in the linear construction of the discourse. Furthermore, I explored the various linguistic devices used to mark the "staging," "scripting"(via constructed dialogue) and "casting" (via the creation of dual personas of DOER and SEEKER) of the drama, emphasizing both the performance aspect of the drama as well as its transcendent quality.

It was suggested that the oral testimonies are not subject to a tight , formulaic structure but are open to the creative manipulation of the speaker in content and style of delivery. However, there is emerging a basic structure that provides a general framework, (or "scenes") that influences the staging of one's dramatization in the

testimony performance. With each performance the testimony is likely to continue to follow the basic scenes, which guide the linear sequence of the narrative.

It was further proposed that the speakers utilize the notion of staging to evoke background knowledge against which the foregrounded information is to be interpreted and understood. Structural staging is concerned with how the linear organization of the discourse is manipulated to bring certain elements into greater prominence and textual staging is background knowledge that results from references to instantiations of "shared transcendent knowledge," which is jointly held by the speaker and audience, but which is not explicated in the discourse. It was also stated that the speakers make use of constructed dialogue, in much the same way as the speaker of the sermons, to script the drama and to elicit participation in the construction of meaning on the part of the audience, as well as giving a dramaturgical flair to the emphasis of a particular point.

Finally, it has been argued that the interplay of the community's two worlds of reality - the secular and the sacred - is marked linguistically through the speakers' use of deixis and the assignment of agency to create dual personas that characterize the distinctions being dramatized. These personas become the principal roles in the drama and are both acted by the speaker, who casts himself in either role depending upon how he wishes to mark which reality is in play. Speakers sometimes encode both personas within a series of related events or elect to encode only the SEEKER persona, chiefly through assignment of agency to God or avoidance of clear assignment altogether. While there are examples of two related events encoding DOER persona only, the tendency is to SEEKER or the combination of the two.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BIBLE STUDY

4.0 Introduction

As noted in previous chapters, sacred events within this community are frameworks within which participants share and make sense of secular events. The small group Bible Study is no exception. This event is particularly concerned with community and the maintenance of social relationships in ways quite different from other sacred events, which have more predictable and ritualized structures, roles and expectations. In the Bible Study, the social relationships of the participants are somewhat more ambiguous and uncertain and it becomes necessary for the participants to manage the event in such a way as to disambiguate those relationships and reaffirm social harmony. The social goal, then, in this speech event is the creation of consensus among the participants through cooperative negotiated interaction around a particular sacred theme. As it is set up, the Bible Study event creates a potential situation in which every participant could assert his or her own personal view in contrast to the views of others, leading to disagreement and conflict as the overriding tone of the meeting. However, the overall tone of such meetings is expected to be harmonious and individuals are expected to be self-effacing in creating consensus of views rather than self-assertive as individuals. Consequently, there is some pressure on each individual not only to speak on the issues raised from their

own perspectives, but to do so in a way that is not in marked conflict with others' perspectives, such that they contribute to the creation and maintenance of a consensus among the participants and hence promote social harmony. How speakers resolve this essential tension between the self as expressing an individual experience and the self as part of the expression of a group's common experience will be the focus of much of the analysis throughout this chapter.

In the following analysis I will demonstrate that the participants in the Bible Study share with each other secular experiences within a sacred framework through interaction that is motivated by a cooperative goal to create consensus, balanced against a conflicting goal of self-assertion through the statement of propositions necessary to satisfy the requirements of the discourse situation. Speakers appear to be sensitive to the effects of their speech behavior and that of others, creatively making use of a variety of linguistic options to successfully make the requisite moves that cumulatively create consensus. I will demonstrate how this consensus-motivated speech behavior serves to distance the speaker from too strong a commitment to the potential effects of the proposition expressed, thus focusing attention on the goal of consensus building and producing single turns that may appear to be uncohesive, but through which the speakers nonetheless achieve their social goal. Additionally, I will show that at the discourse level participants cooperate to negotiate consensus through the joint construction of a series of related turns, the result of which is the successful disambiguation of uncertain social relationships through discourse. Finally, I will demonstrate what these participants do cooperatively to repair breakdowns in consensus building due to such things as turn transfer, over-assertion of individual speakers, and unauthorized role switching.

4.1 Description of Bible Studies

Bible studies are characteristically more informal than church services, but share some similar features, specifically a leader who presents the teaching and guides any subsequent discussion, and an audience. The subject of a Bible study is, obviously, most often a portion of the Bible, but may also be a study of a religious article or book. Unlike the sermon, there is frequent interaction between the Bible study leader and the other participants. The roles are different in this speech event, in that every participant, including the leader, is on the same level and, although a certain amount of authority is vested in the leader by virtue of his or her position as moderator and final arbiter of disputes in the discourse (e.g. unauthorized role switching or inappropriate topic shift), the participants perceive the leader as more of a peer than a pastor and are, thus, less likely to accept what he says without comment. A Bible study is usually held in the home of one of the participants, although Sunday School classes are considered Bible study groups and meet in rooms at the church building, and as such, have a more formal atmosphere to them (e.g. much less interaction and discussion). Bible studies in the home, however, are as much social events as they are pedagogical ones. There is frequently a meal prior to the study or in almost all cases refreshments and "fellowship" (or informal social interaction) afterwards. As the Bible study begins, the participants find a place to sit in the living room area of the home and usually engage in informal conversation as they get situated. At some point, the leader will interrupt the conversations and announce that the Bible study will begin, usually with a prayer. It is frequently the custom for the leader to spontaneously call on someone to lead in a prayer, rather than assuming the responsibility himself, as

would be the more frequent case in the church service. The Bible study usually begins with a discourse by the leader, which is interrupted only sparingly with comments from the group. It might be important to note here that the concept held by the participants relative to the Bible study event is that the participants are all audience and that the God is the speaker, through the Bible. While this basic concept is also in play in the sermon event, more importance is placed there on the pastor as speaker and vehicle of the message than is the case with the Bible study and its leader. For that reason, in the Bible study event, everyone is free to make comments and to add to the teaching, or even disagree with some point therein, although this is done very indirectly under the overriding constraint of creating consensus, as will be argued herein. Sometimes Bible studies are ongoing and have fixed teachers(e.g. Sunday School classes), whereas at other times Bible studies may be organized for a given period of time for a specific purpose. Bible study leaders tend to emphasize that their role is more that of a facilitator and on an equal social level with the rest of the participants, rather than one of authority over them. This is accomplished in part through the leader's seemingly spontaneous and relaxed presentation of the teaching, avoiding any features that might put him "on stage" or "in the spotlight," so to speak, and emphasizing his or her role as no different from that of the others. In fact, participants in a Bible study generally react negatively if they perceive the leader to be dominating the floor and casting himself in a role of pastoral authority. Furthermore, this emphasis on the egalitarian nature of the participants in the group is reflected in each participant's contribution to the Bible study, such that speakers will often make an apology if they believe that their speech has come across as "sermonic" in nature and has, thus, given the impression that the speaker has presented himself or herself in

something other than the preferred role in the interaction. This apology may take the form of a phrase such as, "I didn't mean to start preaching," accompanied by laughter or some joking comment from the rest of the group.

The Bible study analysed herein was organized by the group of people investigated in the study and met only once, at which time the analyst was present as a participant and taped the proceedings with the full knowledge and agreement of the group involved. The leader of the group, designated by the initial J, was selected as the leader because he had expressed the "call of God on his life to the ministry." In fact, subsequent to the taping of this Bible Study, J was ordained into the ministry and currently serves as pastor at a small, rural Baptist church in Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana.

The Bible Study can be broken down into two main parts: the leader's teaching and the group discussion. During the teaching section, there is very little interruption or interaction with the rest of the group and, although dominated by a single speaker and focused on sacred topics, the teaching section differs from the sermon in its dearth of semantic layering techniques and use of metaphor. Furthermore, the speech is marked almost exclusively by the use of the inclusive "we" form (as opposed to the "I/me" form) to mark solidarity and rarely any marking of the speaker's assertion of authority. Other features discussed in the sermon (i.e. constructed dialogue and use of imperative forms) are also not as frequent, which can be said to indicate that the Bible study leader's role falls much closer to the pole of solidarity with the congregation than it does that of spiritual authority. This section will not be a focus of analysis in this study.

This Bible study is centered around an article entitled, "In Search of the Effective Church " from an independent religious journal called Leadership. The article proposes four major categories of churches: 1) the reaching out church, 2) the reaching in church,; 3) the reaching up church and 4) the handing down church. The leader summarizes the article during the teaching section and specifically delineates the distinctions between these four church types. The subsequent discussion centers around these four types and elicits contributions from the participants concerning their preferences . This moves into a discussion of the group's evaluation of their own church, relative to these church types and their respective advantages and disadvantages and subsequently moves to a discussion of the group's pastor and their perceived problems with him and his leadership.

4.2 Goal of the Speech Event

As previously noted, in the Bible Study speech event, participants gather in a setting in which the possibility for changes in social relationships exists and therefore they must continually make assessments of the ongoing development of the social relationships and make contributions accordingly that will work in concert with the others' contributions to achieve the common goal. In this speech event, two constraining factors are in operation over the behavior of the participants. First of all, because speakers are engaged in discourse, they are obliged to contribute propositions that are linked together in some way such that the discourse maintains a structure made up of successive and coherent turns. In this case, it is the expressions of secular experiences of the individual members that form the basis for the propositional content necessary for coherent discourse. This constraint which governs propositional

content within the discourse I will call the **structural coherence constraint**.

Regardless of other goals speakers may have within a given speech event, they cannot achieve these goals via discourse without satisfying this requirement: that coherent discourse will, at one level, consist of linguistic instantiations of semantic propositions. However, this discourse constraint is at best only a skeletal one in any speech event involving the negotiation of social relationships and perspectives. This is especially the case in the Bible Study event.

The second constraining factor is what I will call the **social relations constraint**, which is not related specifically to the propositions within a discourse, but concerns the creation and maintenance of specific social relationships between participants in the speech event. Depending on the speech event and the participants, the social goal may vary and, in the case of the Bible Study, the apparent goal is the creation of consensus. Since the propositional content of the discourse is of secondary importance to the event, the speakers are preoccupied with choosing from among a variety of possible linguistic strategies in order to structure contributions to the discourse that will effect an appropriate reception of the particular speaker (S) by the hearers (H). In fact, the data will show that speakers do employ a variety of such linguistic strategies that generally have the effect of placing some distance between the speaker and his or her propositional statements, which in their basic form would be closely tied to the speaker and assertion of self. If baldly stated in their basic form, their propositional statements could be in conflict with the larger social goal of consensus building. The speaker is consequently forced to creatively and skillfully manipulate available linguistic devices in order to satisfy the structural constraint he or she must meet as well as the social goal he or she desires to attain. In order to do this, the speaker

appears to monitor his or her output to check for discrepancies and utterances that would create an imbalance and, thus, a breakdown in consensus. This results in turns that can appear to be syntactically disconnected in ways that are not typical of everyday conversational interaction.

In the analysis that follows, I will explore the internal structure of individuals' contributions to the discourse, presenting examples of individual speakers' turns and the various mechanisms they employ in their attempts to build consensus.

4.3 Internal Turn Structure

In this section, I will explore the internal structure of contributions to the discourse and will demonstrate that where speakers' propositional statements appear to be in conflict with the larger social goal of consensus building, the speaker is committed to creatively and skillfully manipulate available linguistic devices in order to satisfy both the structural constraint inherent in discourse, as well as the social relations constraint. The Bible Study speech event is one in which the participants are faced with ambiguity relative to their social relationships. Like other more ritualized group events (e.g. worship services, choral prayers, congregational hymn singing), the Bible Study provides an opportunity for participants to reaffirm their membership in the community and their relationships to each other through a particular speech event. However, unlike these other ritualized events, the Bible Study does not predict nor guarantee this reaffirmation will, in fact, take place. Rather, the participants must themselves create, as they speak, the structural basis of cooperative interaction in order to negotiate this reaffirmation among themselves. In order for this to take place, the participants must successfully avoid threats to each other's face, specifically

through the creation of consensus. Consensus is not easily achieved because of the general necessity to directly state propositions, and the specific requirement in this particular event to state propositions that assert one's personal opinions, thus paving the way for potential conflict between participants. Therefore, the speakers must structure their turns carefully such that they can adhere to the coherence constraints of the discourse, while concurrently effecting the desired reception by the other participants of the projection of the self as one whose contributions are in keeping with the communal goal of consensus. Speakers tend to accomplish this by employing linguistic strategies to distance themselves from the self-asserting propositional content of the utterances. Speakers have a variety of options concerning how and to what degree distance is created across utterances within a turn. A speaker's use of options creates a style of speaking that falls somewhere along a continuum from perceived consensus-building at one pole, marked by the requisite distancing features, to perceived self-assertion at the other pole, marked by ordered syntax and a dearth of distancing features. Therefore, the basic operating principles for turn construction appear to be:

- (1) State a proposition to maintain coherence in terms of topic.
- (2) Convey to hearers, via various discourse strategies, that there is distance between the speaker and his or her responsibility for any potential threat to consensus due to the utterances of those propositions.

In the analysis that follows, I will identify and explain the various distancing strategies that appear in the discourse of the participants in the Bible Study and subsequently exemplify the ways these strategies appear variably within the turns of individual speakers. It is important to note that these various features that I will list

and explain do not occur in isolation, but appear in concert to cumulatively create the perception by hearers of conceptual distance between speaker and the potential negative effect of the propositional content of speaker's turn.

Extract 1 illustrates one of the ways that speakers attempt to resolve the tension between the "self" as expressing an individual experience and the self as part of the expression of a group's common experience through the use of a variety of linguistic devices that can create the effect of distance between the speaker and his or her responsibility for any potential threat to consensus due to the utterances of propositions.

Extract 1

- 1** I guess. I would have to agree with, with Rich.
 It would have to be number three, the reaching up ,
 'cause that,
 because of,
- 5** I get excited about praise. I get excited about worship,
 uh.
 I would say then
 from that point,
 it would have to be number one,
- 10.** you know,
 that the reaching out to those that -
 well, no, I'm sorry, it would be number two, not -
 I wouldn't fit in to the church that was professional and to the "t" ,
- 14** my wife would verify that

This speaker uses a variety of linguistic strategies to create the impression of distance, one of which is the **hesitation marker "uh"** in line 6. Levinson (1983:326) points out that one way to explain this marker is to label it as evidence of "verbal planning", i.e. a filler for psychological processing of subsequent syntactic output. However, it might be more accurate to consider the social implications of the use of "uh" within discourse, specifically its interpretation by hearers as a feature that conveys speaker's intention to be self-effacing, rather than assertive, in their attempts at preserving face in the event of a perceived face threatening act. Indeed, the argument that hesitation markers are fillers for psychological processing might be modified to suggest that the processing being done is not purely syntactic, but social - i.e. the speakers are processing their developing awareness of the social situation, their previous utterances and the hearers' interpretations of the same. The processing of these factors could be a constraining force influencing the speaker's subsequent output. Brown and Levinson (1987:186 - 187) include such hesitation markers as instantiations of the politeness strategy they call "Give deference," noting that such deferential moves have been claimed to be characteristic of the discourse styles of female speakers and low-status speakers who are reported to more consistently convey such self-effacement in discourse. However, it might be more consistent to note that features such as hesitation markers (as well as other strategies to be discussed within this analysis) which are frequently attributed to these particular classes of speakers are, in fact, not a feature of speakers at all, but rather a feature of speech events, specifically events in which "giving deference" or maintenance of face are at a premium. This appears to be the case with the Bible Study events, as

previously noted. The speakers shared goal in the speech event is the creation of consensus, which requires that each individual participant manage his or her contributions such that the perception by the hearers is not that of self-assertion and face-threatening on the part of the speaker, but rather the speaker's appropriate contribution to consensus building and, ultimately, social harmony.

In line 10 of extract 1, the speaker uses another feature that I will label an attempt to **claim common ground** (Brown and Levinson, 1987:103) and which is marked by "you know." This feature can be interpreted by a hearer to mark the speaker's attempt to include hearers in the authorship of the proposition by calling attention to the fact that, in the speaker's perspective, the proposition marked , or something similar to it, is to be treated as generally accepted by the group. This marker can further be understood to draw the hearers into the speaker's construction of turn and invite a cooperative attempt to create consensus around potentially threatening propositional content. Extract 2 illustrates the extensive use speakers can make of the "you know" particle.

Extract 2

- 1** I like to leave church knowing that I been to church,
you know,
you know with number three.
I like,
5 you know,
every service to be,
you know,
uplifting, inspiring,

- you know,
- 10 `and emotionally high,
you know.
- I like leaving like that, and.
- But I like things to flow very smoothly.
- I believe,
- 15 you know,
that in a sense right now Natalbany some of number four with,
you know,
strong Bible teaching,
- 19 you know.

In lines 4 - 11 of extract 2, the speaker's utterances instantiating her proposition are separated in an almost rhythmic fashion by the "you know" particle, with the vowel reduced in the first syllable and the intonation falling on the second, indicating that the function is not that of a **comprehension check**, in which the tone shifts from normal to high on the second syllable. Without the "you know" particle included, the speaker's proposition could be uttered within uninterrupted flow as a simple sentence: "I like every service to be uplifting, inspiring and emotionally high". Since the speaker does not use this method of instantiation, one can interpret the extensive use of "you know" as an attempt by the speaker to mark for the hearer the speaker's perspective that the proposition has the potential for conveying to the hearer a rather strong statement of personal preference and therefore the speaker must mark some distance between herself and this potentially threatening act.

The utterance in line 7 of extract 1 illustrates the use of one of a set of agreement strategies that appear in speakers' turns and which can be interpreted as attempts by the speaker to mark agreement at some level with the hearer or group, such that consensus is furthered. The particle "then" is cited by Brown and Levinson (1983:115) as a "conclusory marker, an indication that the speaker is drawing a conclusion to a line of reasoning carried out cooperatively with the addressee." In this particular turn, the argument could be made that the line of reasoning has not been cooperatively concluded because a single speaker has dominated the utterances. However, one might also argue that the speaker, in extract 1, has introduced his turn with a reference to a more direct agreement with a prior speaker (line 1) and followed that with reasons for that agreement (lines 3 -5). The assertion by the speaker of his agreement with another participant is unchallenged by the group which makes the **pseudo-agreement** marker unambiguous at this point, since the reflexive nature of the agreement assertion implies that the other participant also agrees with the speaker and, thus, cooperates by association with the reasoning that follows from this agreement. The particle "so" can also be used for this type of pseudo-agreement as exemplified in extract 3 where the speaker once again gives reasons for his agreement with another speaker and, based on that agreement, concludes his reasoning with a marker that is interpreted as pseudo-agreement.

Extract 3

- 1 I get excited about, about praise and about worship,**
- 2 so I -**
- 3 it would be definitely that one.**

In extract 1, line 1 there is also evidence of yet another type of strategy that can be interpreted as hedging the speaker's full responsibility for the truth or accuracy of his utterance. The term "I guess" has been identified as a hedge that is "oriented to Grice's cooperative dimensions" (Brown & Levinson, 1983:164) and, as such, focuses on creating distance between a speaker and his commitment to the truth of a proposition. In this kind of analysis, an appeal is made to the Gricean concept that a set of general principles (or maxims) operates over speakers' utterances to facilitate the efficient and cooperative use of the language system. The maxim of quality has been described as an attempt to "...try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically: (i) do not say what you believe to be false (ii) do not say that for which you lack evidence"(Levinson, 1983:101). It could be pointed out, therefore, that a phrase such as "I guess" could be interpreted as a hedge by the speaker on his commitment to the truthfulness of his proposition by marking that the proposition is not claimed by speaker to be precisely correct and, thus, the speaker should not be held accountable. This kind of hedge occurs quite frequently in this data and, in each case, the argument could be made that these are hedges on the speaker's commitment to the truth of his proposition. However, another plausible interpretation for this hedging phenomenon could be proffered to perhaps more accurately account for what is being marked by the speaker in this discourse. It could be argued that what the speaker marks with his use of hedges on Gricean maxims such as quantity is not his commitment to the proposition being uttered, but his commitment to what the hearer interprets from his proposition. In other words, a proposition that states a speaker's personal opinion could be interpreted by the hearer as a threat to consensus. If the speaker believes this interpretation by the hearer to be a possibility, he may decide to

hedge his proposition with some sort of marker. This marker could be interpreted by the hearer as an indication of an attempt by the speaker to assure the hearer that if the proposition is perceived as a threat to consensus, the speaker does not intend that to be the case. Thus, the hearer could accept the speaker's contribution to the discourse because the hearer understands it to be acceptable to the demands of the social situation. This interpretation of hedges allows for the possibility that a speaker can utter a proposition whose truth he is definitely committed to and at the same time mark it with a hedge like "I guess." In so doing, he marks the uncertainty of the social implications of the proposition and not the proposition itself. In extract 4, there is evidence of several of these types of hedges traditionally labeled as Gricean, but which could be marking perspective on social relations.

Extract 4

- 1** I think that as,
 where, maybe, we, maybe even the church at Natalbany is,
 uh, I wouldn't want to say completely lost the vision,
 but I think we've allowed some other things become priority than where we,
 where we really need, need to be focusing
- 6** and I believe that, that is a major cause of death -

In this excerpt we see examples of quality hedges such as "I think" (lines 1 and 4), "maybe" (line 2) and "I believe" (line 6). It could be argued here that an interpretation of hedges like these that classifies them as markers of a speaker's commitment to the truth of his proposition seems weak in light of the fact that the propositions in question are assumed to be the speaker's own opinions, the truth of which we would

assume he is committed to. However, opinions in this social situation could be interpreted as counter to the opinions of other participants and threatening the desired consensus within the group, motivating a hedge that marks this social concern, rather than one that hedges the commitment of a speaker to the truth of his own opinions.

In line 7 of extract 1, the speaker uses an expression ("I would say") that is one of a larger set of strategies in which the speaker creates a hypothetical world in which to place his utterance. In this case the modal "would" allows the speaker to create a hypothetical world that is conditional on some other proposition, not directly stated, being the case. By placing propositional content in this conditional, hypothetical world, it can be interpreted by hearers as marking some degree of distance between the speaker and his commitment to the potential social implications of his utterance, as, for example, in line 7 ("I would say"), line 1 ("I would have to agree with, with Rich") and line 13 ("I wouldn't fit into the church that was professional and to the 't' ").

Within this larger distancing strategy marked by the use of the modal "would" to create a hypothetical world, speakers often embed other features that are also interpretable as having a distancing effect. In extract 1, lines 2 and 9, the speaker avoids any mention of himself (e.g. "for me") that a modal structure like these ("it would have to be") would normally take. Therefore, not only does the use of the modal " would" conjure up a hypothetical world, interpretable as a distancing strategy, but the deletion of an overt attribution to self further enhances this effect.

Speakers also make use of other modals (e.g. "ought", "should", "can" and "could") in various ways , illustrated in the following extracts:

Extract 5

- 1 That ought to be a, a opportunity**
- 2 if everybody involved is mature and open to God**
- 3 that ought to be a chance to, to discuss.....**

Extract 6

- 1 I mean, it should be a positive thing,**
- 2 and, uh**
- 3 sometimes it isn't because people's flesh gets in the way....**

Extract 7

- 1 but I can see him saying that he wants to train others to do the job**
- 2 but then I hear him coming back and saying.....**

Extract 8

- 1 it could probably be classified as number three in that area,**
- 2 but it wasn't exciting all the time.....**

In line 14 of extract 1, the modal "would" is used as part of a larger strategy in which the speaker **appeals to some outside support** for the proposition he has uttered. The speaker suggests that someone other than himself (i.e. his wife) can verify the truth of his statement. In the attempt to appeal to outside support, the speaker conveys the idea that the proposition under consideration is somehow part of a larger and communally accepted and agreed upon set of propositions and is,

therefore, not disputable and consequently not a threat to the group consensus.

Additionally, the fact that the speaker frames this appeal for outside support under the operation of the modal "would" can lead the hearer to assume the speaker is marking a great deal of distance between himself and the potentially negative social effect of too strong an expression of self in this setting. Also, speakers not only appeal for outside support from other speakers, but also from their own previous assertions that can be considered part of the public record. For example, in line 2 of extract 9, the speaker notes that the proposition that follows (line 3) has, in some way been a part of the public record and, as such, becomes a kind of public domain which anyone, including the current speaker, can help themselves to without penalty.

Extract 9

1 I feel like, and I

2 I've said this,

3 I believe God'll either move him or He'll change his heart. One of the two.

It can be claimed that the proposition that the speaker proffers in line 3 of extract 9 is not a new assertion, but one taken from a previously existing public record. Therefore, the speaker's use of this appeal for support from the public record can be interpreted as distancing the speaker from the potential face threatening act that a totally new claim might engender. In general, then, the appeal to outside support transfers responsibility for any potential face-threatening act away from the speaker in the current context, making this simply a repetition of an already familiar proposition. This is especially noticeable in extract 10, wherein the speaker appeals for outside support to the Bible, the community's sacred and ultimate authority:

Extract 10

**1 because I like knowing that I can go straight to the throne of God through
 . praise and worship**

2 The Bible says that God inhabits the praises of His people.

3 I know that, that being in God's presence is where I want to be

In line 2, the speaker's appeal to the authority of the Bible can be interpreted as moderating the potential consensus-threatening effect of such a strong assertion by assigning it to the province of scriptural authority, thus marking it, for this community, as something that is already accepted and is not threatening.

An appeal to outside support can also be negatively stated as in extract 11:

Extract 11

1 you know, Jesus never said, "I'm calling you to come here and take it easy,"

2 you know.

3 He's easy and he takes the burden,

4 but, I mean, it's not an easy road to walk

The speaker's appeal to the words of Jesus in line 1 can be interpreted, once again, as an attempt to appeal to Biblical authority by constructing a negative proposition that accesses the authority vested in the words of Jesus (i.e. "Jesus never said"). It is not relevant for the attention of the hearer to be drawn to any particular Biblical reference, only that the general authority of the words of Jesus somehow be accessed and credited as the source of the speaker's proposition.

One of the major claims that can be made regarding this data is that in an attempt to build consensus and avoid threatening the desired social harmony, contributions to the discourse are such that the hearers are left with the responsibility of making

inferences and interpreting meaning. In other words, discourse like this is "speaker- and hearer-based" (Bublitz 1988:143), with the hearer not limited to purely a passive position, but actively involved with the speaker in the cooperative negotiation of meaning. Throughout the data, it can be claimed that speakers' utterances provide the hearers with discourse that seems to have little cohesion and which seems to mark a hedged commitment by the speaker, such that the hearers must make the necessary connections and inferences. In addition to the cumulative effect the various distancing strategies have in this regard, lines 9 - 13 of extract 1 illustrate where a speaker apparently capitulates to the hearers regarding the assignment of reference, which he seems to have difficulty doing. In line 2 of extract 1, the speaker has already identified the choice ("number three") he wishes to make and subsequently attempts to contrast that choice with one that is not his preference. This attempt at contrast is apparently signalled by the prepositional phrase "from that point" in line 9 ("that point" being interpreted as the previous point of agreement in the discourse marked by "then"), which could be interpreted to infer some kind of subsequent contrasting proposition. In line 9 the speaker identifies "number one" as this contrasting choice, only to initiate a self-repair of this utterance in line 12, accompanied by another attempt at identifying the referent in question (this time "number two"). This choice is not the one that he seems to want to identify and he appears to stop in mid-sentence in line 12 ("it would be number two, not -") and simply identify his intended choice by describing it via circumlocution rather than direct identification. In so doing, it could be said that the speaker abandons his attempt at direct identification and surrenders that responsibility to the hearer.

In lines 3 - 5 of extract 1, the speaker employs another distancing feature that is one of a larger set of strategies that can be interpreted as marking an attempt by a speaker to defuse what is, from the speaker's perspective, a potentially threatening discourse move by **assigning causality** for the proposition he has stated. This strategy is usually marked by the logical connector "because," either in its full form or a phonologically reduced one ("cause" or "cuz"). In each case it can be understood that the speakers are marking a causal relationship between some instantiated proposition and certain events. However, the speakers appear to assign causality in ways that indicate the causal relationships are not ones over which the speakers have any control. Rather, the speakers mark their perspective that they are passive experiencers of the causal relationship and, thus, have no control over, nor responsibility for, the proposition and, consequently, for the potential threat to consensus such an asserted proposition might convey to hearers. In lines 3 - 5 of excerpt 1, the speaker encodes causality for his proposition (stated in lines 1 and 2) with the "get-passive" construction, marking the speaker's perspective that some agent other than the speaker himself is responsible for his state of excitement. In extracts 12 and 13, the speakers assign causality to higher authorities (the Bible and God).

Extract 12

- 1 I like praise and worship**
- 2 because I like knowing that I can go straight to the throne of God through praise and worship....**

Extract 13

- 1 If you have a church that's a praising and worshipping church,**
- 2 that, yes, you do expect miracles**
- 3 because God's there**

In line 2 of extract 12, the speaker makes reference to a Biblical phrase ("the throne of God") that is clearly accessible by the participants in the group. This incorporation of a Biblical phrase into her turn can be interpreted by the hearers as an attempt to place responsibility for the proposition ("I like praise and worship") outside the control of the speaker and in the realm of Biblical authority. The same is true in extract 13, where the speaker notes that the expectation of miracles, in a sense, cannot be helped by the speaker since it is the result of "God's presence." In extract 14, the speaker makes reference to a well-liked member of the community (who is not present) and, once again, to a higher authority via a metaphorical reference ("The Word") for the Bible :

Extract 14

- 1 I used to just thrive on when Bruce was going to preach at church**
- 2 I would just love it,**
- 3 'cause Bruce was going to preach from the Word.**

One might also argue that the strategy of assigning causality or giving reasons can be analyzed as an attempt to claim relevance for the prior proposition, in keeping with the cooperative construct of Grice (Brown & Levinson, 1987:170). However, as previously noted, it could be more accurately concluded that this strategy is not tied to the relationship between speaker and proposition in the Gricean sense, but between speaker and his perspective on the potential response by hearer.

Extract 15 illustrates another very interesting way in which a speaker assigns causality, such that it can be interpreted as conveying much distance between the utterance and the speaker's commitment to its potential effect.

Extract 15

- 1 I'm going to say the two,
- 2 'cause I, we used to visit a church that was all the way with praise and
worship -
- 3 everything's praise and worship.
- 4 My sister-in-law was going hungry. They had no food. Nobody cared,
- 5 you know.
- 6 They were so busy praising the Lord, being in His presence, they couldn't
see anybody else

In lines 4 - 6, the speaker appears to make a series of utterances in which there is no syntactic connection or cohesive tie from one to the other. Although the general effect of the utterances can be interpreted as assigning blame to the church group for their lack of concern, from the speaker's perspective, such blame is not directly marked by any kind of logical connector (e.g. "because"). The inference that "nobody cared" because "they couldn't see anyone else" is left to the hearer to interpret, conveying the impression that the speaker is attempting to distance herself to a great degree from what could be considered a significant threat to group consensus, specifically the assignment of blame to a church group.

In lines 2 and 6 of extract 15, the speaker uses particular **lexical choices** that could also be interpreted as marking distance between her and the utterance effect. The use of the verb "see" in line 6 can be said to be ambiguous relative to the

assignment of blame, which appears to be the most likely interpretation of the utterance. Likewise, in line 2, the speaker uses the verb "visit" to encode the relationship between herself (and spouse) and the particular church group which is the indirect subject of criticism in her turn. The lexical choice "visit", as opposed to other likely possibilities such as "belonged to" "was a member of", etc., can be interpreted as an attempt by the speaker to disassociate herself from connection to the church and, thus, excuse herself of any responsibility for the behavior she subsequently marks, albeit indirectly, as negative. Also, in lines 2 and 3, the speaker uses phrases that can be said to mark the situation as an extreme version of a type of church that the speaker does not prefer. The phrases "all the way" and "everything's" can be claimed to mark this extremity and thereby indicate that the speaker is attempting to distance herself a great deal from this situation. Furthermore, the speaker uses the habitual past tense form "used to" in line 2 of extract 15, which can be interpreted as, once again, encoding a distance relationship between the speaker and the situation described by the utterance, specifically one that is exemplary of the kind of church that the speaker apparently does not prefer, but that the majority of speakers thus far in the conversation have indicated they do prefer. Brown and Levinson (1978:204) note that manipulation of tense can be interpreted as indicating an attempt at distancing in time. "As the tense is switched from present into past, the speaker moves as if into the future, so he distances himself from the here and now" (Brown & Levinson 1978:204). The additional marking of habitual aspect in this utterance can be said to indicate another degree of remoteness of distance between speaker and potential utterance effect. In extract 16, the speaker also shifts perspective with a shift in aspect from progressive to perfective.

Extract 16

- 1 But, you know, talking about, uh,**
- 2 talking about sermons and things,**
- 3 that has just been a sore subject with me lately**
- 4 about different sermons and things that I've heard lately**

In lines 1 and 2, the speaker uses the present progressive form to indicate the speaker's attempt to claim that her utterances are compatible with the agreed upon topic and, thus, coherent. However, the speaker shifts to the present perfect in lines 3 and 4 to introduce her personal view, marking it as not an ongoing, long-term attitude, but a temporary recent phenomenon. The adverb "lately" (repeated) emphasizes this recency effect. It seems that this speaker has an objection to something, but marks this personal objection fairly inexplicitly and emphasizes that it is not her long-term perspective.

One final note concerning the distancing strategies of the speaker in extract 15 concerns her **shift in pronoun usage** in line 2. In this case, it can be said that the speaker is attempting to share any potential responsibility for negative effects of this utterance by the inclusion of her spouse in the experience, marked by a shift to the pronoun "we."

Other examples within the discourse suggest that speakers also use the "we" form as an attempt to call for cooperation and joint ownership of the utterance. Thus, the responsibility for any threat to consensus potentially caused by the utterance could be interpreted as shared. In extract 17, the speaker appears to attempt to assert his opinion, choosing to distance himself from sole responsibility for its potential effect

and suggest instead group ownership by use of the "we" form to assign responsibility for what can be interpreted as a negative state of affairs.

Extract 17

- 1 I wouldn't want to say completely lost the vision**
but I think we've allowed some other things to become priority than
where we,where we really need, need to be focusing,
and I believe that, that is a major cause of death -
when we lose that vision and the goal
- 6 and the direction we want to take...**

In line 1, the speaker signals that the utterance is a hedged assertion of his opinion ("I think ") which he follows with a shift to the pronoun form "we." Notice as well the various other strategies present in this piece of discourse which can be likewise interpreted as hedging the speaker's commitment to and responsibility for the potential effect of the utterance. For example, in line 2 the phrase "some other things" is referentially ambiguous, leaving the hearer to infer the specifics. Also, in line 1 the speaker prefaces his utterance with a strong disclaimer in "wouldn't want to say" that indicates some unwillingness on the speaker's part to make a strongly negative statement. The use of the adverbial "completely" in line 1, which could be interpreted as marking a strong commitment on the part of the speaker, could be said to be moderated by the combination of the modal "would" and the negative particle "n't", thereby transforming it from a marker of strong commitment to that of a hedge.

Extract 18 provides evidence of additional examples of a speaker using strategies that can be interpreted as hedging his commitment to the potential social effects of his utterance.

Extract 18

- 1** Yeah, talking about that.
 I can, uh,
 not put down on Bro. Rodney,
 but I can see him saying that he wants to train others to do the job,
5 but then I hear him coming back and saying that
 " they didn't clear it through me before they did that, "
 you know. And, uh,
 if he's going to release it and, and have his disciples work with him,
10 he's got to have faith that God's going to lead them to do it, you know.
 See what I'm saying.
 I'm, I see where he needs to know what's going on,
 but he needs to allow people to go and,
 and, and let God lead them to do something,
15 let them have the vision.

In line 1 of this excerpt, the speaker appears to anchor his current contribution to some prior contribution by using a marker that can be interpreted as indicating agreement ("yeah") and by anaphoric use of "that" ("talking about that") to refer to the previous topic with which the speaker seems to mark his agreement. It could be argued that in doing this, the speaker conveys the idea that the proposition under consideration is perhaps an extension of previous propositions, already stated and accepted. Therefore, the speaker's subsequent contribution can be interpreted as an attempt by the speaker to suggest that his utterance is not purely his own and, thus, not a threat to the group consensus. The signal that one is anchoring one's contribution to

a previous one and restating or elaborating it, can be claimed to indicate the speaker's intent to transfer responsibility for any potential face-threatening act away from the self in the current context, making this simply an elaboration of an already familiar and accepted proposition.

In line 3, it can be argued that the speaker is attempting to deal prospectively with the possibility that his subsequent utterance might be received negatively by the hearers, by "inoculating" (McLaughlin, 1984:202) the hearers against the construction of negative impressions of him. The speaker's utterance "not to put down on Brother Rodney" is an example of what Hewitt and Stokes (1975:3) call a **"disclaimer,"** the function of which is "...to mark an upcoming utterance as a candidate for negative typification, and ask for the hearer's indulgence" (McLaughlin, 1984:202). This particular type of disclaimer is what can be termed an **"appeal for a suspension of judgement"** (Hewitt and Stokes, 1975:6) in which the speaker can be interpreted as providing a necessary context in which the upcoming utterance should be interpreted so that it will not be perceived as offensive and threatening. It is this disclaimer that can be said to set up the proper context for interpretation of the speaker's possible intent for the utterances that follow, in which the speaker uses the conjunction "but" to describe an adversative (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:237) relationship between two propositions, expressed in lines 5 and 6. In line 12, the speaker appears to make use of another type of disclaimer that can be called a **"cognitive disclaimer"** (Hewitt and Stokes, 1975:5), in which the speaker, in an effort to anticipate and inoculate against the potentially threatening subsequent utterance, indicates that he is not unaware nor insensitive to the situation he is criticizing. With the use of "I see where he needs to know what 's going on," the speaker can be said to signal the hearer that any

potentially negative implications resulting from the subsequent utterance should be discarded in favor of an interpretation that addresses consensus.

In line 6 of extract 18, the speaker uses constructed dialogue (Tannen, 1989; Yule and Mathis, 1990) and, as mentioned in a previous chapter (see Chapter 2), serves as a mechanism by which speakers create involvement (Tannen, 1989) or "shared territory" (Brenneis, 1986). This involvement of the hearer in the utterances of the speaker can be interpreted as distancing the speaker from sole ownership of the discourse move and facilitating joint and cooperative ownership of the proposition. Therefore, the use of this strategy within discourse allows the speaker to be indirect in his statement of meaning and focus attention on the active role the hearer must play in defining and constructing that meaning. The hearer's anticipated ability to see things in the same way as the speaker is also marked by "you know" (lines 7 and 10) and "see what I'm saying" (line 11).

In line 6, the speaker casts the general proposition he is summarizing within the framework of constructed dialogue - creating a hypothetical world, creating a character and assigning him the script that instantiates the proposition in focus. This can be said to be a move by the speaker to further reinforce his intent to be cooperative and consensus building (as originally expressed by his direct agreement phrase) through a means that, in effect, allows someone else (in this case a fictitious character) to offer the proposition. Thus, if the proposition expressed in the constructed dialogue were not to be received as non-consensus threatening, the speaker's intent would not be suspect due to his attempt to acknowledge agreement and the use of constructed dialogue to invite the hearer to draw conclusions as to meaning. It can be concluded that, in order to hedge on his responsibility for the

potentially consensus threatening reception the second part of the adversative relation could convey to the hearers, the speaker chooses to frame that proposition in the constructed dialogue of a hypothetical world. Additionally, the constructed dialogue strategy and the adversative relationship that it attempts express, can be said to be part of a larger strategy by the speaker that can be interpreted as part of the overall attempt to create distance. Specifically, in lines 2 and 4, the speaker places the entire sequence under a modal operator ("can") that transforms the attempt at making an indirect accusation into a hypothetical one.

In extract 19, the speaker also uses constructed dialogue to create a hypothetical world in which to dramatize something that is potentially threatening to the harmony of the group, specifically a confrontational meeting with the pastor.

Extract 19

- 1** I don't ever see,
 even if, even if it's sort of a confrontation type thing,
 like if it's a,
 you go into a pastor and say,
- 5** "Hey, look I'm really uncomfortable with what we're doing. I don't like
 this, whatever," you know.
 That ought to be a, a opportunity,
 if everybody involved is mature and open to God,
 that ought to be a chance to, to discuss, to share
- 10** and for either him to say,
 "I really see your point, "
 or, or

"No , I can't agree with you."

And you say,

"Okay, now I know where we stand and I can pray about what I'm to do, "

16 I mean, it should be a positive thing.

In this extract the speaker can be said to be offering his opinion as to the proper manner in which to confront the spiritual authority-figure of the church community, the pastor. This can certainly be interpreted by hearers as something that is potentially controversial and that which could create tension, rather than social harmony. The speaker uses constructed dialogue to create a fictional version this confrontation rather than opting to directly advocate it. Furthermore, he can be said to mark even more remoteness between his utterances and his responsibility for their potential effect, by orienting the dramatization within a larger, hypothetical world, suggested by the use of "if" in lines 2 and 3. The speaker appears to further emphasize this distance by the assignment of distancing strategies by the speaker to the hypothetical character of the constructed dialogue. Thus, in line 5, the hypothetical speaker shifts from first person ("I") to the use of inclusive "we" and additionally hedges his commitment to the potential effect of this hypothetical utterance with the use of "whatever." In lines 7 - 9 that follow, the speaker continues to use features, such as the periphrastic modal "ought to" and the hypothetical/conditional marker "if", which can be interpreted as continuing to mark remoteness. The dramatized confrontation continues with additional constructed dialogue in line 11, where the hypothetical speaker is the pastor, and lines 13 and 15 where the hypothetical speaker is the same as in line 5. Notice that in line 15, the speech of the hypothetical speaker also features a pronoun shift (from "we" to "I") and a modal ("can") that can be said to mark an even greater

degree of remoteness. It can be said that the overall effect of this fictionalized account is in the hands of the hearer to interpret. The speaker sets the stage and creates a drama that presents a potentially threatening situation indirectly and hypothetically such that the hearers are left to interpret the experience without a threat to social harmony.

In line 4, the speaker makes use of another very common feature within the data as a whole that can also be interpreted as a marker of distance between the speaker and his responsibility for the effects of his utterance. The pronoun form "you" in this instance can be described as an example of **generalized exophoric reference** "in which the referent is treated as being as it were immanent in all contexts of situation"(Halliday and Hasan, 1976:53). Furthermore, the use of this kind of reference can be interpreted as assigning agency for an action to someone other than speaker or hearer, thus distancing the speaker and hearer in the current context from the action described. It can be said that the generalized "you" form "makes no contribution to the cohesion of a text" but is an "institutionalized exophora" and, as such, "makes no demands either on the verbal context or on the context of situation" (1976:53). However, it could also be argued that in the social context of the Bible Study, where the agreed upon goal is social harmony and the preferred strategies for its achievement have to do with speakers distancing themselves from the potential disruptive effects of their utterances, the use of generalized exophoric reference can be interpreted by hearers as a mechanism for marking such distance.

One other feature found frequently in the data is an apparent attempt by speakers to indicate their close affiliation with the other participants in order to facilitate consensus, rather than the marking of distance between speakers and their

responsibility for the potential threatening effects of their utterances. This is primarily accomplished through speakers' references to ingroup identity markers (Brown and Levinson, 1987:107) or, as previously noted (Chapter 4), words and ritualized phrases that are instantiations of the "shared transcendent knowledge" of the community (Demarest, 1975). In extract 18, line 3 the speaker makes reference to "Brother Rodney", using an address form for the pastor that is familiar and easily interpretable for the participants of this community. Furthermore, in line 9 the speaker's use of the word "disciples" could be ambiguous to the outsider, but is proffered without explanation by the speaker for the hearer to interpret by working out its specific meaning from the store of shared community knowledge. Other examples, such as the phrases "have faith" and "God's going to lead them" in line 10 and "let them have the vision" in line 15 illustrate what could be said to be attempts by the speaker to access and reference elements within the shared community knowledge in order to mark the speaker's close relationship with the hearers as joint participants in the community.

It has been argued that the Bible Study speech event is one in which the participants are faced with ambiguity relative to their social relationships. The participants must themselves create, as they speak, the structural basis of cooperative interaction in order to negotiate this reaffirmation among themselves. In order for this to take place, the participants must successfully avoid threats to each other's face, specifically through attempts to create consensus. Speakers tend to accomplish this by employing linguistic strategies to mark distance between themselves and the potentially threatening effect of the self-asserting propositional content of their utterances.

4.4 Cooperative Sentence Building

In addition to using various linguistic features within the structure of their individual turns to mark distance between speaker and his or her responsibility for any potential threat to consensus in an attempt to attain social harmony, the speakers also appear to work together to construct a series of turns which are topically connected and can be said to appear cumulatively as though they were sentences in a single turn. This kind of cooperative effort to construct a series of turns is akin to the concept of **cooperative sentence building** (Tannen, 1986:56), in which "the listener picks up the thread of the speaker and supplies the end of the speaker's sentence, which the speaker then accepts and incorporates into the original sentence without a hitch in rhythm and almost without a hitch in time" (1986:56). In extract 20, line 13 the speaker repeats what the other speaker in line 11 has said ("he wants someone else to do it") and attaches the particle "yeah" which can be interpreted as an attempt to further emphasize agreement.

Extract 20

1 Jn: I think its in a little bit of two, three and four.

M: Yeah, I agree with, yeah. 'Cause Bro. Rodney's real strong in Bible teaching and our Sunday Schools are rooted really well in the Word.

Jn: He's the only one (R: But the-) He's the only one that fits in category number one, because he's the

6 only really, that really wants the professionalism - in him.

J: Yeah, I see him as one, in, in Brother Rodney's life-

Jn: But I see , but I see, but I see us reaching out the dysfunctional and the downcast

10 M: But I don't see him reaching out, I don't see Bro.

Rodney

M: reaching out that much, he's not evangelical -

D: well, he would, he would like to, he wants to get somebody to do it

Jn: I-I'm not talking about

15 M: He wants someone else to do it, yeah.

Jn: I see him fittin in the professionalism part of number one (M; yeah)

but I see us reaching out to the downcast and the dysfunctional. I see

us working on praise and worship and we definitely have, you know,

19 alot of good Bible teaching...

In lines 1 - 7 the three speakers (Jn, J and M) appear to advance the same idea cooperatively, after which speaker M in line 8 proposes a contrasting proposition that speakers M, D and Jn subsequently advance cooperatively through a variety of mechanisms. For example, in line 2, the speaker marks agreement with the use of "yeah" and appears to complete the utterance of speaker Jn in line 1 by stating the causes for that proposition, marked by the logical connector "because." As has been previously pointed out, speakers state propositions and assign causality for them within single turns as means of marking distance in the attempt to achieve consensus. It can be argued that this same strategy is used here cooperatively by two speakers instead of one, with the same consensus goal in mind. Another common feature that can be said to contribute to the joint and cooperative effort at turn construction is the use of anaphoric reference, as in the case of speaker Jn's use of "he's" in line 4, which refers back to the referring expression "Brother Rodney", uttered by speaker M in line 2. Subsequently, in line 6 another speaker uses "him" anaphorically to also make

reference to this expression in line 2. It can be argued that when a group of speakers jointly constructs a series of turns, one speaker may introduce a referring expression that becomes shared property and which other speakers might then simply reference anaphorically. In line 8, speaker M proposes a contrasting proposition which speakers D and Jn join. Notice that in this turn not only does the speaker mark it as contrasting with the conjunction "but", but also uses the referring expression "Brother Rodney" again, rather than referencing it anaphorically as has been the case thus far. However, subsequent to this, as the other speakers join in the process, they refer anaphorically to this expression (lines 10, 12 and 13). It might also be noted that in these two series of cooperatively constructed turns, speakers overlap each other's speech a great deal in what appears to be an attempt to reinforce the other speakers' contribution and cooperatively advance a topic or idea, rather than an attempt by one speaker to take control of speaking away from another.

Extract 21 provides another illustration of joint action by speech participants, as speakers M, R and D also work cooperatively to construct a series of contributions that advance a particular topic.

Extract 21

- 1 M: ...You know, the dysfunctional is a single family,**
- 2 single parent household-**
- 3 R: Yeah, you think about in our church -**
- 4 D: Divorcees -**
- 5 M: Divorcees, uh-**
- 6 D: I mean, it's, it's basically what we have in our church, I mean,-**
- 7 M: you know.**

In line 3, speaker R marks agreement ("yeah") with the utterance of speaker M in lines 1 and 2, while speaker D in line 4 picks up on speaker M's listing in lines 1 and 2, and adds another item for that list ("divorcees"), which speaker M subsequently accepts and incorporates into her contribution in line 5. Finally, in line 6, speaker D uses the word "it's" to refer anaphorically to the situation described by the previous contributions, and attempting to relate that situation to the current experience of the community.

We have seen, then, that not only do speakers use various linguistic features within the structure of their individual turns to mark distance between speaker and his or her responsibility for any potential threat to consensus, they also appear to work together to construct a series of turns which are topically connected and can be said to appear cumulatively as though they were sentences in a single turn. Such features can include the direct incorporation of one speaker's (A) utterance into the subsequent utterance of another speaker (B) by that speaker (B), the use of anaphoric reference, markers of direct agreement (such as "yeah"), and the assignment of causality by one speaker (A) to the proposition instantiated in the utterance of another speaker (B).

4.5 Repairing Perceived Breakdowns in Consensus

Although it has been argued that the goal of this speech event is the creation of consensus in order to maintain social harmony, the attainment of this goal is not always successful. When there appears to be a perceived failure to achieve consensus, speakers use several strategies that can be interpreted as attempts to repair that breakdown. It should be noted that the notion of a failure in the attempt to build

consensus is a hearer-based one. Speakers can be said to mark their own contributions so as to hedge their responsibility for potential threats to consensus, but it is the hearers that ultimately judge whether those attempts have, in fact, been successful. And, it appears that while the creation of consensus is the generally agreed upon goal of the group, the repair of perceived breakdowns in that consensus is equally important. In extract 22, speaker M makes a contribution that she marks as potentially threatening consensus by using the discourse particle "well" at the very beginning of her turn.

Extract 22

- 1 M:** Well most of the new churches that have been started in Southern Baptists have been more or less like churches of number two.
Uh, and it was -
- 3 Jn:** well I see most of the churches in Hammond starting, starting off with number one. Look at Immanuel, Look at Woodland Park..
- 5 D:** most of the big Southern Baptist are one and four
- 6 M:** well, yeah but
- M:** I'm talking about but that's just here Jonda,
that's just a small picture, what we see here....
- 8 Jn:** yeah, that, that's what I'm just, yeah

The particle "well" can be said to be associated with dispreferreds (such as a disagreement) and can be interpreted as signals to the hearer concerning how an utterance might match up to the expectations of cooperative interaction. Thus, the speaker in line 1 can be said to preface her utterance with the particle in order to signal a potential disagreement, which the speaker in line 4 appears to have taken as a

challenge that breaks consensus and frames the event, momentarily, as a confrontation. Thus, this speaker also prefaces her utterance with the particle "well," which can be interpreted as an attempt to signal the previous speaker that a confrontation has been created. It might be further argued that speaker M in line 7, in an attempt to defuse the confrontation that her previous utterance initiated, uses the construction "well", indicating a recognition of disagreement, and "yeah but", which is can be recognized as **token agreement** (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 114; Levinson, 1983:338), an attempt to make a contribution to restore consensus. This is followed by an attempt to reconcile the disagreement between the two speakers ("that's just a small picture, what we see here), which appears to be accepted by speaker Jn in line 10, as indicated by her use of the direct agreement marker "yeah," and what could be said to be an incomplete utterance that suggests the speaker's attempt to acknowledge that what speaker M has said is, in fact, her own proposition after all.

Laughter and joking can also be said to play a role in repairing perceived breakdowns in consensus building. In extract 23, line 1 the speaker seizes control of the conversation and attempts to change the direction of the discussion, by means of asking the entire group a question that demands opinions from each of them. This is not just a seizure of the floor, but a seizure of the role of group discussion leader, which has already been assigned to another member throughout the speech event thus far. Therefore, this apparently unauthorized switching of roles can be said to cause momentary disruption in the ongoing goal of consensus building. It can be said that one bit of evidence to support this is the unusually long (3.0 seconds) pause after his question and the immediate attempts by at least one of the participants (C) to defuse the situation with a joke in line 3.

Extract 23

1 R: Last year where do you think we've grown to, or do you. (3.0 sec pause)

Went down to. Digressed. Regressed. Do you feel like we've changed.

C: Degraded (laughter)

J: in the last year?

5 Jn: No, I feel like we're really just kind of satten still -

M: I think we're, we're still, I think we ---

Jn: I think we

satten still for about a year and half now -

R: I think we've went down.

10 T: In what area?

M: Where?

R: We no longer have Training Union, dear.

M: yeah. We don't have any Wednesday night

R: there's no missions study .

15 Jn: we're, we're not reaching out anymore -

R: there's no reaching out

M: No we don't reach out.

**R: there's no, I mean if you want to talk about organized, organization and
organized this and organized that, there's no organized time of visiting -**

20 M: We don't have Bruce there telling us we ought to win souls

**R: Basically the church membership has thrown all of the outreach onto the
Deacon Family Ministry**

23 M: yeah

Following the laughter, some of the speakers attempt a response to the question, which can be interpreted as an attempt at acknowledgement by them of the legitimacy of the previous speaker's (R) change of roles, rather than a challenge to it. However, in line 9, the speaker once again offers what is, in light of the responses of the other speakers in lines 4 - 8, interpretable as a disagreement, further challenging the consensus building process. It could be argued that from this point the other speakers, in the apparent interest of restoring the consensus building process, make efforts to cooperatively construct contributions that will instantiate his propositions, rather than challenging him and attempting to persuade him to change them. Thus, in line 11, speaker M asks speaker D to elaborate more fully on the idea he expressed in line 9, prompting a response from him in line 12 offering evidence. Subsequent to this, speaker M latches on to the proposition instantiated in line 12 and adds another piece of evidence ("yeah, we don't have any Wednesday night"), to which speaker D immediately responds (line 14) with yet another item in the apparently growing list of reasons. In line 15, the speaker Jn joins in this cooperative construction with a contribution that further adds to the growing, jointly created list of reasons ("we're not reaching out anymore"). This contribution by speaker Jn in line 15 is directly incorporated by speaker R into his utterance in line 16, which is likewise incorporated into the utterance of speaker M in line 17, immediately following. This cooperative construction of turns, specifically the joint listing of reasons begun in line 12, continues in the following lines as speaker R further elaborates his reasons in lines 18 and 19, which are further added to by the contribution of speaker M in line 20.

It has been argued that when there appears to be a perceived failure to achieve consensus, speakers use several strategies that can be interpreted as attempts to repair

that breakdown. These strategies can include markers of token agreement, laughing and joking, and the cooperative construction of a series of turns, specifically the direct incorporation of one speaker's (A) utterance into the subsequent utterance of another speaker (B) by that speaker (B), and the assignment of causality by one speaker (A) to the proposition instantiated in the utterance of another speaker (B). It has been noted that the notion of a failure in the attempt to build consensus is a hearer-based one. Speakers can be said to mark their own contributions so as to hedge their responsibility for potential threats to consensus, but it is the hearers that ultimately judge whether those attempts have, in fact, been successful. And, it appears that while the creation of consensus is the generally agreed upon goal of the group, the repair of perceived breakdowns in that consensus is equally important.

4.6 Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that the social goal in this speech event is the creation of consensus among the participants through cooperative negotiated interaction around a particular sacred theme. It has been proposed that the Bible Study event creates a potential situation in which every participant could assert his or her own personal view in contrast to the views of others, leading to disagreement and conflict as the overriding tone of the meeting. However, the overall tone of such meetings is expected to be harmonious and individuals are expected to be self-effacing in creating consensus of views rather than self-assertive as individuals. Consequently, there is some pressure on each individual not only to speak on the issues raised from their own perspectives, but to do so in a way that is not in conflict with others, such that consensus is maintained among the participants and social

harmony is promoted. It has been shown that speakers resolve this essential tension between the self as expressing an individual experience and the self as part of the expression of a group's common experience by employing a variety of linguistic strategies to mark distance between themselves and the potentially threatening effect of the self-asserting propositional content of their utterances. In the construction of their contributions, speakers use a variety of options that can be said to convey distance between the speaker and his or her responsibility for any potential threat to consensus due to the utterances of those propositions. These strategies include, but are not necessarily limited to hesitation markers (e.g. "uh"), claiming common ground (e.g. "you know"), pseudo-agreement (e.g. "then," "so"), hedges oriented to the Gricean cooperative dimension (e.g. "I guess," "I think,"), the use of modals to create a hypothetical world in which to place one's potentially threatening utterances (e.g. "would" "could"), appeals to outside support, use of the logical connector "because" to assign causality for a proposition, choices of specific lexical items over others, manipulation of tense, shift in pronoun usage to the "we" form, anchoring one's contribution to a previous utterance through the use of direct agreement markers (e.g. "yeah") and/or anaphoric reference, disclaimers, constructed dialogue, the use of generalized exophoric reference, and use of ingroup identity markers.

In addition to using various linguistic features within the structure of their individual turns to mark distance between speaker and his or her responsibility for any potential threat to consensus in an attempt and that speakers appear to work together to construct a series of turns which are topically connected and can be said to appear cumulatively as though they were sentences in a single turn. Such features can include the direct incorporation of one speaker's (A) utterance into the subsequent

utterance of another speaker (B) by that speaker (B), the use of anaphoric reference, markers of direct agreement (such as "yeah"), and the assignment of causality by one speaker (A) to the proposition instantiated in the utterance of another speaker (B).

Finally, it has been argued that when there appears to be a perceived failure to achieve consensus, speakers use several strategies that can be interpreted as attempts to repair that breakdown. These strategies can include markers of token agreement, laughing and joking, and the cooperative construction of a series of turns, specifically the direct incorporation of one speaker's (A) utterance into the subsequent utterance of another speaker (B) by that speaker (B), and the assignment of causality by one speaker (A) to the proposition instantiated in the utterance of another speaker (B). It has been noted that the notion of a failure in the attempt to build consensus is a hearer-based one. Speakers can be said to mark their own contributions so as to hedge their responsibility for potential threats to consensus, but it is the hearers that ultimately judge whether those attempts have, in fact, been successful.

CHAPTER FIVE

DINNER CONVERSATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with a speech event that is quite different from the others investigated in this study. Whereas the other chapters dealt with speech events that were specifically of a sacred or religious nature (e.g. sermons, oral testimonies and the Bible Study), the event investigated in this analysis is one that is not only not specifically religious in nature, but is also not peculiar to this community or ones like it. The speech event, which will be called a dinner conversation, is one which conceivably could be found in any community in which eating and conversation are normal types of social interaction. Therefore, it would be expected that this kind of secular interaction would not normally be marked with any features that could be interpreted as transforming that event into something sacred. In fact, within this secular speech event, participants attempt the negotiation of shared experience in a variety of ways that make no reference to their shared sacred world of reference, much like other speech communities might do in a similar speech event. However, there are several examples in this data in which participants choose to negotiate shared experience by reference to the sacred, linguistically marking their contributions to that effect. However, when participants make mention of the sacred, it is generally not to be interpreted as an attempt to interpret secular experience in a sacred context in order for its meaning to be fully realized, as is the case, for example,

with the oral testimonies. Rather, the sacred references herein are generally lighthearted in tone, often accompanied by laughter, and seem to be based on a shared knowledge of when an invocation of some religious reference is to be treated as humorous. Part of that humor is clearly accomplished via irony. It will be argued that the use of irony in this data is a case of "echoic mention" in which "the speaker mentions a proposition in such a way as to make clear that he rejects it as ludicrously false, inappropriate, or irrelevant" (Wilson & Sperber 1981:308). Thus, ironical utterances "are cases of mention, and are thus semantically distinguishable from cases where the same proposition is used in order to make an assertion, ask a question, and so on" (1981:316).

Like the Bible Study event, there appears to be a social relations constraint operating over the interaction as participants seek to develop and reaffirm their communal relationships and reinforce social harmony via discourse. However, unlike the Bible Study event, the social goal is not specifically the attainment of consensus, since the dinner conversation event is not set up as a situation in which every participant is called upon to assert his or her own personal view in potential conflict with others. Rather, the dinner conversation affords participants the possibility for interaction that is designed to facilitate the transfer of personal information and news, such that the participants have a greater sense of shared experience and knowledge. The dinner conversation appears to be similar to a family reunion, in that the interaction hangs on topics such as the participants' children and extended families, recent personal experiences, jokes and humorous anecdotes, participants' courtship and marriage experiences, and the like. The interaction is marked by extensive overlapping talk and laughter, making the event appear to have a lively and

humorous, almost party-like atmosphere. Since the dinner conversation event is one in which the overriding goal is the reaffirmation of social relationships and the creation of further shared experience, speakers do occasionally appeal to the aspect of shared sacred reality, which is arguably the most salient feature that contributes to the social cohesion of this community.

The ways that speakers in this religious speech community mark the secular speech event called the dinner conversation with sacred references will be the focus of analysis throughout this chapter. It will be shown that speakers mark their account of secular experience with sacred references, mostly within the context of joking and accompanied laughter. It will be argued that participants perceive this speech event to be one in which the respective status of each individual is equal and in which the goal is shared experience. For this reason, the use of sacred reference in a way perceived to be serious can be interpreted as a potential transformation of the event into one more specifically sacred, in which social roles are either not on equal footing or are in potential conflict and must be negotiated. Consequently, irony and laughter provide an important backdrop against which sacred reference can be made without making the social event more serious or putting at risk the social relationships of the participants and the particular goal of shared experience.

Additionally, it will be demonstrated that at times, when it is perceived that the event is shifting into something other than an event that provides for the possibility of shared experience, the discourse will be marked with linguistic features indicative of a more ritualistically sacred event and, further, participants can invoke irony and laughter to realign the interaction. The data on which this analysis is based was collected at a single dinner encounter of the same eight participants investigated in the

previous chapters, and covered a two hour period of time. The participants were seated around a dining room table for most of the evening and conversation took place during the eating as well as afterwards, when the group moved into the living room. The participants had been told that they would be tape-recorded, but no further instructions or information were given them.

5.1 Humor in the Sacred

As has already been pointed out, speakers sometimes mark their account of personal experience with sacred references, mostly within the context of joking and accompanying laughter. In making these references, participants are not generally supposed to alter their roles such that they upset the social equilibrium and, consequently, the participants appear to place such references within the framework of a joke and subsequent laughter. Thus, in extract 1, line 1 the speaker suggests a topic that is clearly not a sacred one (a vacation), but which subsequently is transformed by a sacred reference (line 9), specifically a reference to "God's provision."

Extract 1

1 R: we can talk about Jay and Christine's vacation -

W: yeah

J: uh (groan) boy

Jn: yeah, I want to hear about that.

5 R: shiny new van, man this is

W: that's your, that was ya'll's van?

R: Mr. Jimmy , Jay called that morning up there at the church and said,

'Well Jay'll be home tomorrow. He'll be here tomorrow, or something -

T: was that God providing, or was that, uh -

10 D: no that was their, their souvenir.

J: no we , we gotta make payments (laughter).

R: now was that God's blessing or not?

D: that's your souvenir for your trip, huh?

**Jn: well, like our Sunday School , "like you mean you're not depending on
15 God to pay that"**

R: yeah, don't you trust Him, are you really trusting God?

T: who's your Sunday School teacher?

Jn: Sheila Kinchen.

R: oh boy, you talk about some conversation.

Jn: man last week was pretty good, wasn't it?

20 T: it was good or bad?

In lines 9 through 16, several participants join together to manipulate reference to the provision of God in a humorous way, which can be interpreted as a cooperative attempt by the participants , rather than a single speaker, to share in the experience of one of the members, by means of the invocation of a sacred reference that is familiar and which they share in common. Notice in line 9 that the speaker suggests, by the use of the conjunction "or", the possibility that the purchase of a van can be seen as a sovereign work of God or as something else, which she does not elaborate. However, in lines 10 and 11, speakers D and J complete the additive relationship (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:244) by disagreeing, marked by the use of the negative particle "no", with the proposition in line 9 and offering alternatives ("it was their souvenir" and "we gotta make payments"). It is interesting to note that in the Bible Study event, such

direct disagreement could be perceived as a threat to consensus and would most likely be hedged in some way or repaired by some individual or cooperative move. In lines 12 and 13, the same type of structure is evident with speaker R setting up two possible choices of perspective on the event, marked with the conjunction "or" in line 12, and speaker D, in line 13, countering with a repeat of the same alternative proposition instantiated previously in line 10.

In lines 14 and 15, the speakers make use of what could be called reported speech or constructed dialogue to propose a sacred perspective on the event. In line 14, speaker Jn makes a strong appeal to the shared experience of the community with her choice of the pronoun "our" to talk about the sacred event called "Sunday School." The speaker makes reference to what can be interpreted as a specific Sunday School event in which the issue of the provision of God was apparently discussed, and makes mention of the general kinds of propositions that could have been uttered in such an event. This general proposition is introduced with the lexical item "like" and can be interpreted as an attempt by the speaker to dramatize, via constructed dialogue. Speaker R in line 15 follows with the same kind of constructed dialogue, presumably reporting on the same particular speech event. Notice that these two contributions contain features similar to those found in the discourse of the Bible Study. For example, line 14 is introduced with the discourse particle "well", which has been previously discussed as associated with dispreferreds (see chapter 4) and can be interpreted as a recognition by the speaker of some kind of potential disagreement, in this case the negative particle "not" that appears in the constructed dialogue and also appears in the constructed dialogue of the speaker in line 15 and which can be interpreted as a kind of accusation. However, these questions in lines 14 and 15 can

be interpreted as playful attempts by the speaker to invite the hearer to infer exactly the opposite of an accusation and imply instead, by means of irony, that the speaker does, in fact, trust God. It can be argued that this is a case of "echoic mention" in which the speaker mentions a proposition in way that indicates that he or she is actually asserting its converse. The impression one gets from this interaction is that the participants are attempting to cooperatively interact and manipulate a variety of topics such that the outcome is a shared group experience. One of the ways this appears to be done is through the manipulation of sacred reference, via ironical utterances, which is understood as an already existing basis for shared experience and knowledge. It is this sacred reference which helps facilitate the cooperatively negotiated shared experience and the irony that prevents the transformation of the speech event into something that could threaten the social relationships of the participants. It is interesting to note that in cases of this kind of manipulation of sacred reference, several speakers are involved in the interaction. It is not a solo performance, but a concerted effort.

In extract 2, a trio of speakers once again uses ironical utterances to comment on a secular event, providing an opportunity for the participants to share in the experience and preserve the speech event and, thus, the group's social relationships in the process.

Extract 2

1 W: That guy pulled out of Columbus?

R: No

D: No, he was going the other way and cut in front of 'em

R: Ward and them were south on North Cherry (M: the man was

5 northbound) and the colored man was northbound, cut, cut into him

Jn: But you see that, that truck, you know, cause, as much as we hated for them to do it, our car wouldn't have taken that hit. Because that, I mean it totaled the front of that truck .

W: So better them (laughter).

10 T: So it was God (laughter).

W: So it must be the Lord, because if it had been us, we'd have been hurt.

R: God we trusted in you .

13 Jn: 'Cause we'd have been in big trouble.

In line 10, the speaker uses a religious reference to comment on the event under discussion in the preceding lines, specifically an automobile accident. In this line, the speaker jokingly credits God for intervening to prevent two of the participants (Jn & D) from involvement in the accident, introduced in lines 6 - 7. This comment can be interpreted by the hearers as an ironic utterance and one that is not meant literally. Thus, hearers can be said to interpret this utterance not as an attempt to contribute propositional information to the pool of knowledge, but as an attempt to accomplish some social goal, by virtue of the fact that the instantiated propositions are interpreted as something other than in their literal meaning. In this case, as previously noted, that social goal is the creation of shared experience through a speech event in which the social roles are equal. Essentially, speaker T presents this comment in line 10 to ironically suggest that what happened was an act of God rather than simply a lucky escape. Because everyone knows, in fact, that it was a lucky escape, other speakers can join in the joking conclusion (i.e. "must be the Lord") with other familiar phrases used when luck or good fortune has to be accounted for. As is generally the case with an ironic description of events, the speakers here share both the knowledge of what

actually happened and the knowledge of how that event is being reinterpreted in alternative terms. The laughter accompanying these references to God's intervention signals that they do not intend the references to be taken seriously and provide a good indication that, however religious these individuals may be, they are nevertheless capable of finding humor in what would be an unnecessary attribution of intervention to God in this local traffic accident. In this instance, making the secular sacred is not a serious undertaking; rather, it is the basis for shared humor and the expression of a common hypothetical view of how events could be interpreted.

In extract 3, the participants in the speech event again make use of irony to attempt to accomplish the social goals of the speech event.

Extract 3

1 M: When I was, when first married Ronald I had learn to cook all over again, because rednecks don't eat the same as Italians. We like pasta (laughter)

D: Let it fly.

J: Rednecks, dagoes, whatever.

Jn: We' we're all one, we're all one in Christ.

7 M: Praise God we're all one in Christ. (laughter)

In the first five lines of extract 3, it appears that the existence of differences between people is becoming the main thrust of the conversation. Those secular differences, in terms of food and ethnicity, are also expressed in slang (typically derogatory) terms. The potential within such talk is that strong negative differences might become emphasized and, in line 6, one speaker produces a familiar religious expression to counteract that potential. Interestingly, in line 7, the same speaker who originated the

talk of differences (in ethnic terms) repeats the religious expression with laughter, apparently recognizing the value of the concept in this situation. The irony here seems to derive from an opposition between what the first speaker (M) perhaps inadvertently seemed to be emphasizing (negative differences) and what she would be assumed by her faith to be committed to (positive oneness). The humor in this particular situation is largely occasioned by speaker D in line 4 ("let it fly ") suggesting that speaker M's words could be taken as some kind of complaint whereas, as indicated in line 7, she is not complaining, or at least, not in any serious way.

In extract 4, lines 1 -5, the speaker recounts a secular experience ,which speaker T in line 6 attributes ironically to the intervention of God.

Extract 4

1 M: Oh, I was trying to find a men's underwear, men's boxer shorts that had tingle my bells written on it. (laughter) And I thought that was cute. (laughter) I thought it was cute and I said, "Nah, I better not do that." Well, it just kept, it kept on, kept on and I can't think of anything to get. We went back to get some and they were gone.

6 T: That was God.

Invoking the intervention of God here, as was done in extract 2, is not done seriously, but rather as an unexpected way of accounting for how speaker M's 'temptation' to do something naughty was thwarted. The lighthearted tone of speaker M's expressed dilemma and the trivial nature of the secular event stand in contrast to something as momentous as God's direct intervention in human affairs and it is this juxtaposition that creates humor. Once again, it is the shared experience of using religious terms and concepts to make sense of the secular world in serious

institutionalized sacred events that provides the basis for this group to interpret this reference to God in line 6 as inherently ironic in this context.

In extract 5, there is more evidence of this kind of ironic use of sacred reference as well as more evidence of the cooperative and concerted aspect of ironic contributions. In lines 1 - 9, the speakers discuss the secular experience (a recent trip) of one of the participants (J). In line 10, speaker T uses the lexical item "ordained", which is a term from the sacred domain and can be interpreted as meaning "ordained by God."

Extract 5

1 J: Jeremiah got sick in the van. (T: Uhh) We stopped to get gas and Candy need-

W: You mean got sick, sick?

M: Uh hmm.

5 Jn: Oooh

J: We stopped to get gas another place and Candy jumped out and got bit by a dog. (D: Oooh)

R: Are you serious? (J: Yeah)

Jn: like sick, staying sick?

10 T: Was this trip ordained?

J: No. (laughter)

Jn: Seems like you have every plague-

C: Maybe you can come and then we'll see how funny it is

J: All the time I'm thinking: "All things work together for good."

(laughter)

16 Jn: So you changed your mind about going to Arkansas.

The fact that the reaction to this question is laughter can be said to be evidence that the hearers do not interpret this question in line 10 as literal, but instead as an attempt by the speaker to mark his utterance as ironic. In line 12, speaker Jn continues this attempt at irony by her choice of the lexical item "plague", a clearly biblical reference that can again be interpreted in this situation as an attempt to be ironic, not literal. It can be argued that it is not the case that the hearers interpreted this reference as an assertion by the speaker that the child's sicknesses, mentioned in lines 1 - 9, are, in fact, plagues in the biblical sense. Rather, it can be said that they interpret this lexical choice as another attempt at irony under the assumption of making the secular sacred, for the purpose of negotiating shared experience, without altering the speech event into an ritualistically sacred one. Finally, in line 14, speaker J makes mention of a biblical reference ("all things work together for good"), which in this case is a direct quote, to comment on his secular experience. Again, it can be argued that in so doing, the speaker does not commit himself to the truth of this proposition in this context, but instead marks his utterance as an attempt, by means of sacred reference, to invite the hearers to share in his experience. The resulting laughter is evidence that the hearers do not interpret his statement as literally meaning that during his trip he was actually thinking the proposition represented by this utterance, but instead interpret it as ironic and non-literal. On the other hand, it could be argued that the speaker generally accepts the proposition's literal truth, but does not so assert it in this context for the social reasons previously argued. If the speaker had intended this utterance as an

assertion of literal truth, it could be interpreted as an attempt to transform the speech event into something more like the oral testimony event, in which speakers recount their past secular experiences and attempt to interpret them through the province of sacred reality. Therefore, it can be said that the use of irony allows for the referencing of the sacred without affecting the social roles by transforming the speech event into something more ritualistically sacred by the assertion of propositions meant to be interpreted literally.

5.2 Avoiding the Serious

The potential for this kind of transformation of the speech event into something else is a real threat. In fact, there is evidence in the data that indicates at least two occasions in which such a transformation is perceived by the hearers as taking place. In extract 6, lines 1, 2, 5 and 6, speakers T and M are engaged in what could be interpreted as an attempt to temporarily transform the speech event into something more like an oral testimony. In line 1, speaker T utters what amounts to a request for M to give her oral testimony. Apparently, M interprets T's utterance as meaning just this since she responds in line 2 with an utterance that has the marks of an oral testimony. Specifically, the use of the passive construction ("had been saved") and the reference to childhood, which is characteristic of the orientation section of the testimony.

Extract 6

1 T: But ya'll did, when did ya'll become Christians, Monica?

M: Ronald was supposedly had been saved whenever he was a kid

Jn: (to R) David, David- David fussed at me last night - Ronald. Ronald.

David fussed at me last night, he said, 'I would never say -"

5 M: I got saved just after we got married

T: Really? How

**Jn: (to R) That one, the last thing you told him - Would you listen to me
when I'm talking to you! (laughter)**

R: I'm listening to my wife to see if she's telling a lie, go ahead, I'm sorry.

M: (to R) She's asking me when I got saved. I'm supposed to lie about it.

11 R: No, you're lying about me. (overlapping talk and laughter)

In this extract, there are two conversations initially in progress: the one between T and M that appears similar to an oral testimony, and the one between Jn and R, which is an attempted discussion of a secular experience. In line 3, speaker Jn attempts to get the attention of R, which she is apparently unable to do, as evidenced by her repeated attempts to summon him. In line 7, she finally gets his attention by making a strong demand ("would you listen to me when I'm talking to you), hedged by the use of the modal "would" and the subsequent laughter. In line 9, speaker R indicates that he has been monitoring the oral testimony conversation between T and M and does so with the use of irony ("I'm listening to my wife to see if she's telling a lie"). It can be argued that in this example, the speaker's utterance can be interpreted not as a literal assertion by the speaker that he believes his wife may be lying, but instead as an attempt by the speaker to respond to a discourse in which he has been specifically named and which has the potential for becoming a more serious speech event, in which roles are not assured but must be negotiated. Thus, his contributions in lines 9 and then in 11 can be interpreted as attempts by him to use irony to save face

that has been potentially threatened by the possible transformation of the speech event by T and M into something of a more serious discussion in which he has been implicated. Speaker M also uses irony in line 10 ("I'm supposed to lie about it?) in response to R's face-saving attempt in line 9. It can be argued that in so doing, she also is attempting to save face that has been potentially threatened by having attention drawn (by R) to what she is saying. The resulting laughter can be said to be evidence that the participants interpret this series of exchanges as ironic, not literal, the result of which is the end of the move toward something akin to an oral testimony event and a continuation of the dinner conversation event.

Extract 7 provides an even clearer example of how the participants can attempt the transformation of the speech event into something more like a ritualistically sacred event: in this case, the Bible Study. Prior to this series of contributions, the participants have been talking about a funeral, but have done so in a way that is characteristic of this type of dinner conversation speech event. In line 1, speaker D initiates a change in topic, as well as speech event type, with his question about the beliefs of Methodists.

Extract 7

1 D: Let me ask you something about that, Do the Methodist believe that you have to take communion to be saved.

J: No, I don't think so.

D: Cause he mentioned several times if you don't partake of the Bread of

5 Life -

Jn: Well, he didn't say it like that .

D: and he talked like he was saying the communion, which he wouldn't say

T: Sure he didn't mean Jesus ?

D: Well, the Scripture, I'm sure, I was thinking that he was taking that
10 Scripture out of context, saying that when you take the bread of life,
meaning Jesus, the Scripture meaning, but I don't know, for some
reason I understood him saying, I may have misunderstood him, that,
that if you didn't take communion that you're not saved-

Jn: There was one time he did make a comment .

15 D: it's sort of sounded like that to me during the service, but I may have
misunderstood him.

W: I don't think they believe that.

Jn: I heard one time he made a comment that, you know, all those who take
of the, of the Bread of Life, you know, shall be saved or something. But I
20 didn't, you know -

T: he might have just -

J: Was that church a Southern Methodist, or United Methodist , or what?

Jn: United Methodist.

24 J: United Methodist.

The contributions that follow line 1 are marked by a variety of linguistic features that are indicative of the Bible Study speech event. In Chapter 4, it was argued that the Bible Study speech event was one in which the overall tone is expected to be harmonious and individuals are expected to be self-effacing in the creation of consensus, rather than self-assertive. Speakers creatively make use of a variety of linguistic options in order to distance the speaker from too strong a commitment to the potential negative effects on the hearer of his or her utterance and thus invite the

hearer to infer that the speaker's utterance is a contribution to consensus. In this series of contributions, these kinds of linguistic options prominently appear and the overall tone of the conversation at this point is marked as more serious by the absence of any laughter, and no overlapping speech, both of which are features more frequently found throughout the dinner conversation event. For example, line 3, although somewhat of a direct disagreement, which is not preferred in the Bible Study event, nonetheless is marked by the hedge "think," also used in line 17. In line 9, the speaker uses a strengthener "I'm sure", but subsequently begins to mark distance by the use of the past progressive ("was thinking", "was taking") and the hedge "I don't know" in line 11. Furthermore, the speaker uses the modal "may" in lines 12, and 15, and the modal "might" in line 21, each of which can be said to create a hypothetical world and, thus, distance the speaker from the proposition's potentially threatening effect. The use of the modal "may" is also part of a larger hedge by the speaker, specifically "I may have misunderstood him" in lines 12 and 15 - 16, which can also be interpreted as an attempt to create distance. The speaker further uses hedges like "sort of" in line 15, "for some reason" in lines 11 - 12, and "or something" in line 19. Finally, speaker Jn makes an appeal to common ground with her use of the particle "you know" in lines 18 and 19. This series of contributions concludes with a pause after line 24 and the topic then shifts to the food being eaten at dinner by the participants during this conversation. Subsequent to that, the conversation returns to features more in keeping with the dinner conversation speaking event, specifically a great deal of laughter, irony and overlapping talk.

5.3 Saving Face

It has been previously argued that speakers can manipulate sacred references, via ironical utterances, which can be interpreted as attempts to facilitate shared experience without transforming the speech event into something that could affect the social relationships. There also appears to be evidence that participants can treat irony of this kind as an attempt to save face when one is embarrassed. In extract 8, speaker Jn becomes the victim of a kind of teasing by the others relative to her lack of past experience that appears to be shared by the others. In lines 3 and 6, speaker Jn uses the modal "would" to comment on the situation described in line 1 by speaker J, which is apparently interpreted by the hearers as an admission by the speaker that the situation she is describing is one that she has not previously experienced. The response to this admission is an utterance in line 7 by speaker M that can be interpreted as expressing incredulity that Jn has not had such an experience.

Extract 8

1 J: They took the station wagon and went parking. The policeman come up and knocked on the window. (laughter)

Jn: I would be so embarrassed.

M: I remember it.

5 R: What, you'd be embarrassed.

Jn: I'd be so embarrassed.

M: You never had that happen to you. (Loud laughter)

Jn: No, I don't think so.

M: Jonda hasn't lived very much, has she.

10 R: Shoot, when we were - back in our young marrieds -

T: Jonda got saved at a young age-

Jn: Some people who are Christians don't do that -

R: We were, we were smart -

M: We didn't go parking and do anything naughty -

15 J: Yeah, right.

M: We didn't, I promise.

R: When we went parking , we always went in gangs

18 M: Like 12 people (loud laughter)

The utterance in line 7 is followed by excessively loud laughter and a subsequent ironic utterance by speaker M that can be interpreted not as having literal meaning, but instead interpreted as an attempt to further separate Jn from the group, relative to this experience. In lines 11 and 12, speakers T and Jn can be said to attempt to defend against this embarrassment and alienation by offering reasons for speaker Jn's lack of experience, through sacred references that are also ironic. In line 11, speaker T suggests that it is Jn's early conversion that prevented her from the experience in questions and in line 12, Jn suggests that it is her present status as a Christian that is the root cause. In both cases, it can be argued that the speakers do not mean these propositions to be interpreted literally as causes, but instead interpreted as attempts by the speakers to invite the hearers to infer that their contributions are meant to be ironic references to the sacred and, thus, signal an attempt by these speakers (T and Jn) to contribute to the negotiation of shared experience, even though that shared experience has been called into question by previous utterances in lines 7 and 9.

It is also interesting to note an example of irony in this extract that does not reference the sacred world. In line 14, speaker R makes an assertion that prompts

speaker J to respond in line 15 with what is apparently interpreted by speaker R as a challenge to the truth of R's proposition, as evidenced by R's subsequent utterance in line 16, offering assurances of truthfulness. In line 15, speaker J utters what could be literally interpreted as a form of direct agreement ("yeah, right"), but which, as previously mentioned, is apparently interpreted as precisely the opposite. Perceiving the utterance in line 15 as a challenge to truthfulness, rather than an agreement, speaker R responds with an insistence that his original utterance (line 14) is true, marking his utterance with the strengthener "I promise."

5.4 Summary

It has been argued that in the speech event called "dinner conversation", the goal of the participants is to negotiate shared experience. The normally secular nature of this speech event would not predict the inclusion of sacred references to accompany this negotiation, as would be the case in more ritualized sacred events, such as the Bible Study or Oral Testimonies. However, it has been shown that participants in this speech event do, in fact, attempt to negotiate shared experience by means of linguistic markers of sacred reference. It has been further argued that these sacred references are generally not to be taken literally, but are intended as examples of irony via echoic mention, in which a speaker mentions a proposition in a way that indicates he or she actually intends it to be interpreted non-literally. Additionally, it has been proposed that participants perceive this event to be one in which the status of each participant is equal and not up for negotiation. Since the goal is the negotiation of shared experience, the most likely method for its accomplishment could be said to be reference to the shared sacred world of reference, which is particularly salient for this

community. However, because the perception is that the status of the participants is equal, care must be taken to avoid sacred references that would transform the speech event into a more ritualized sacred event in which individual experience is focused (e.g. the oral testimony) or social harmony must be fostered (e.g. the Bible Study). Therefore, irony and laughter provide a means by which sacred references can be made to contribute to the negotiation of shared experience, without the problem of transforming the speech event into something more intrinsically sacred, at a risk to the status of the social relationships of the participants and the essentially non-serious nature of the social event.

Finally, it has also been argued that the goal of avoiding the transformation of the speech event is, in a few cases, not achieved and, in such cases, the discourse is marked by linguistic features more indicative of ritualized sacred events such as the oral testimony and the Bible Study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In a general sense, this study has focused on some of the various means by which human beings interact to cooperatively construct social reality and attend to social relationships via language. It has been argued that the presentation of one's self, the social evaluation of self and others, the creation of inferences and the manipulation of symbols all work together in interactions to offer speakers and hearers some vehicles for the attainment of their social goals. More specifically, I have investigated a particular religious speech community and their efforts via language to construct a unique kind of social reality, one which obtains from the cooperative interaction of participants to give sacred perspective to ordinary, secular events, creating new religious experiences which are shared by the community and which strengthen the group's social harmony.

I investigated four speech events, three of which were specifically religious in nature (i.e. the Sermon, the Oral Testimony and the Bible Study) and the fourth of which was an event not peculiar to this community not specifically religious in nature (a Dinner Conversation). I have argued that the sermon is the primary forum for reciting, explaining and augmenting the community worldview, as well as a means of transmitting important information. Beyond that, however, the sermon is a narrative speech event in which the speaker, audience, and God interact to construct meaning and build social relationships. The speaker, as dominant speaker, but co-participant,

dramatizes a message in which both the sacred (God) and the secular (the congregation) interact. The role of the speaker (pastor) in the sermon event is to use his verbal performance to both mediate his own role and his message between the two polar extremes representing the sacred and the secular such that he proffers a positive evaluation of his self by the audience. The result is a dramatization marked by a variety of linguistic features such as pronoun choice, use of the imperative with optional degrees of hedging, and constructed dialogue. I have further proposed that the pastor uses constructed dialogue in the sermon dramatization to invite the audience to join him in the interpretation and construction of meaning, which can be said to build solidarity between the pastor and the congregation. Among the devices used to demonstrate the pastor's competence as a preacher is a form of parallelism called semantic layering, a rhetorical device in which the speaker attempts to elaborate his point by means of a series of no less than three statements that follow a similar syntactic form and share some kind of connected meaning relationship. Additionally, the speaker can include in the discourse familiar secular experiences and invite the audience to join with him in assigning them sacred meaning. The interplay of these strategies, if effectively coordinated by the speaker, can be interpreted as a credit to his competence in this verbal art form.

In discussion of the oral testimony, I have argued that this even is a verbal performance in which the speaker and audience share a sacred experience which transforms the secular world of the everyday. The speaker stages this drama by creating scenes through the linear structure of the narrative as well as through the foregrounding of shared knowledge, instantiated in key insider terminology familiar to the community. The speaker also scripts the drama with constructed dialogue that

provides lines for the cast of characters created and acted by the speaker, which take the form of the dual personas of Seeker and Doer, marked by the use of deixis and the assignment of agency. Through these dual personas, the speaker is able to highlight different perspectives on the experience being described.

I have further argued that in the Bible Study event participants attempt the creation of consensus through cooperative negotiated interaction around a particular sacred theme. The event creates a potential situation in which every participant could assert his or her own personal view in contrast to the views of others, leading to disagreement and conflict as the overriding tone of the meeting. However, individuals are expected to be self-effacing in creating consensus of views rather than self-assertive as individuals and the overall tone of such meetings is expected to be harmonious. Consequently, there is some pressure on each individual to speak in such a way as not to be in conflict with others, so that consensus is maintained among the participants and social harmony is promoted. It has been shown that speakers resolve this essential tension between the self as expressing an individual experience and the self as part of the expression of a group's common experience by employing a variety of linguistic strategies to mark distance between themselves and the potentially threatening effect of the self-asserting propositional content of their utterances. In addition to marking distance within the structure of their individual turns, speakers appear to work together to construct a series of turns which are topically connected and can be said to appear cumulatively as though they were sentences in a single turn. Furthermore, it has been argued that when there appears to be a perceived failure to achieve consensus, speakers use several strategies that can be interpreted as attempts to repair that breakdown and it has been noted that the notion of a failure in the

attempt to build consensus is a hearer-based one. Speakers can be said to mark their own contributions so as to hedge their responsibility for potential threats to consensus, but it is the hearers that ultimately judge whether those attempts have been successful.

Finally, it has been argued that in the secular dinner conversation event, which would not normally predict the inclusion of sacred references, speakers nonetheless attempt to negotiated shared experience by means of linguistic markers of reference to sacred reality. However, these reference are not meant to be taken literally, but are produced as irony via echoic mention. This particular strategy seems to allow the participants to access what is for them the most salient aspect of shared experience (namely, the sacred world of reference), while at the same time preventing a speech event in which social roles are equal and not up for negotiation from being transformed into an event in which social roles are clearly hierarchical (e.g., the sermon), or in which social harmony must be fostered (e.g., the Bible Study), or in which individual experience is focused (e.g., the oral testimony).

Because the worldview of this community understands the invisible, spiritual, sacred world to be the fundamental reality within which everything else must be understood and interpreted, speakers in each event make attempts, to some degree, to transform secular events and infuse them with new meaning by giving them sacred perspective. Although the specifics of each event differed, there appear to be some similarities that can be observed. In the first place, both the sermon and the oral testimony have been described as dramatized verbal performances in which the speakers assume dual roles, marked by a variety of similar linguistic devices, that serve to create a drama that provides different perspective on spiritual experiences. In both cases, the audience shares with the speaker a sacred, spiritual experience which

reinterprets their secular reality and gives it meaning. Furthermore, in both the Bible Study and Dinner Conversation, speakers are engaged dialogically in cooperative negotiated interaction. In the case of the Bible Study, participants attempt to achieve a goal of social harmony through cooperative interaction around a sacred theme. In the Dinner Conversation, participants cooperatively negotiate shared experience around secular themes, but using irony to make sacred references to acknowledge the sacred frame within which it is believed that all secular experienced is understood, while avoiding the transformation of the secular event into something overtly sacred.

It is worth noting that in all these speech events, speakers move back and forth between the secular and sacred worlds with seeming ease and skill to the extent that to insiders the distinctions are not always consciously distinguishable. This is due to the fact that in this community, the sacred world of God and the living Word is the reality that permeates all of life, informs the world of the secular and is always the standard against which emotion, thought and action is judged. This sacred world is dominated by God, whose authority is absolute and whose presence permeates even the most secular of events, although members are arguable more conscious of His presence in situations that are more specifically sacred (namely, worship services, Bible studies, the giving of oral testimonies, etc.). God's authority is primarily represented in the reality of the written Word (the Bible), which is held to be a living record of the living words of a living God. It is believed that the printed word is incarnated with the life of God and that when one reads, or hears read the Word of God, it is not the equivalent of experiencing a novel or some historical account, but is an experience of the present voice of God speaking to His people. In addition to this written Word that speaks, the ever present God is believed to speak directly to the inner thoughts of

individual members through a “still, small voice” of the Holy Spirit, who indwells the believer. Because of this emphasis on God’s active, present speaking through Word and Spirit, reality for this community is an actively created phenomenon, growing out of ongoing experiences with God. In the sermon event, God speaks through the pastor and the Word and the congregation is invited to join in the drama and actually respond physically at the altar in a direct, personal experience with God at the close of the discourse. In the giving of one’s oral testimony, a speaker not only recounts past experience, but in so doing creates new experience in which God is present and speaking through him or her to the hearers. In the Bible Study, members cooperatively create social reality centered around the Word and as cognizant of the presence of God in their midst, speaking through the Word and through the participants to create social harmony. Finally, even in the secular dinner conversation, speakers are aware of God’s presence, frequently acknowledging this through the use of irony and humor.

One further generalization that appears to cut across all the speech events examined is the speakers’ apparent concern in each event with the appropriate presentation of self and the corresponding evaluation of self by others in the course of their speaking, such that each employs a variety of linguistic devices that can be said to mark concern for issues of self and threats to face. Furthermore, the participants in each event appear to operate under some assumptions concerning common social goals shared by the group (e.g. social harmony in the Bible Study event), the net effect being the focus of attention on that goal or goals and attempts by the speakers to constrain and influence their contributions.

Because of the narrowly focused ethnographic nature of this discourse analysis, it is doubtless that there remain many insights uncovered and many questions unasked

and unanswered, and it can be argued that this particular analysis may not extend, without modification, to other religious discourse (e.g. other denominational groups). However, much research remains to be done on other discourse genres of this type and, additionally, more attention needs to be paid to other kinds of discourse from the perspective of the interactive and interpersonal nature of speech events.

As the pastor of this community remarks in one of his sermons, **“There’s power, you see, in the Word. All power is in the Word.”** Similarly, this analysis can be said to argue that all power is in the words of human beings to represent themselves to others via language, all power is in the words of human beings to cooperatively create social meaning and reality, all power is in the words of human beings to interact and maintain social relationships, and that any analysis of discourse, if it is to be reliable and decisive, must take this into account.

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APPENDIX A

SERMON TRANSCRIPTS SAMPLE

And then, what did Mary immediately do then, when Elizabeth confirmed it. Mary really got excited. You know, you want to know how excited she got? Just look at verse forty-six: “ Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.’” Le-Le-Let me interpret that for you. You know what I think she said, “Glory Hallelujah I’m pregnant! Jesus the Son of God is going to be my child!” Now this woman is excited. She bounces all over the place and all the way back up to Nazareth. Look at it. Uh, she, she has, uh,” regarded the lowly estate of His maidservant” - he’s talking about the Lord, uh, looking on her. “Done great things for me, holy is His name.” Fifty. “His verse is on, His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.” She goes all the way through there magnifying, glorifying, exalting the Lord. She’s excited. She’s received the word of God. So she provided an atmosphere, here, for that word, that impregnated seed, to grow up. Nine months later, Jesus was born. She praised God for what He had done. You know what praise really is? Praise is really confirming God’s word to do everything that He said He would do. That’s what it really is.

Are you hurting this morning? Physically hurting? Emotionally hurting? You’re asking the question, “Is it going to work out? Is it going to work out for me?” I want to tell you on the authority of God’s word, it’s going to work out. Don’t make peace with sickness. Don’t make your peace with imperfection. Don’t make your peace by accepting alot of things. Just go ahead and believe God’s word. Someone said that, uh, most Christians are like a fellow with a headache. You’re terribly uncomfortable

with the headache, but you don't want to cut it off. So what do you do: just live with it. Christians are like that: we're terribly uncomfortable with, uh, with really believing God's Word, but we don't want to completely cut ourselves off from it and so we just stay in a state of miserableness. So many Christians today, we don't look like we're victorious at all. We were singing awhile ago, "Victory in Jesus." But we don't really look like that alot. Let me ask you just a simple question: Do you think anybody's going to follow you to Jesus, looking the way you look? Hmmmm? Do you think somebody'll want to get in line behind you and follow you to Jesus by looking the way you look? Some of you, I'm telling you, it- it breaks my heart when I stand up here and speak to you, because you've got such mean looks on your face sometimes when we talk about God's word - you never smile. Now some of you are smiling now, I praise God. But some of you have not broken a smile yet across your face.

APPENDIX B

ORAL TESTIMONY SAMPLE

Well I was uh born and raised in a Christian family back on the farm (laughter). So, uh, I was brought to church every week and I knew what I was supposed to do and what I wasn't to do, but still, you know, there was something missing in my life. And when I was eleven years old, one Sunday, I didn't uh, I was in church , sitting by my mother and I didn't - and I can still remember today, Bro. Rodney was preaching - I didn't remember, really anything he said, but when the invitation was given, I just felt the Spirit come on me - 'course I was young and I didn't know at that time what it was. But, I just felt, you know my heart was so heavy and I started crying and I said Mother, I need to go up. Well, Mother said let's pray and then we prayed and she said I want you to talk to Bro. Rodney before you go up. And uh, and so that next week I went to his office and he shared with me, you know, one on one, uh, that I need to ask Jesus into my heart and ask him to forgive my sins. And so I knelt in his office and asked Jesus to come into my heart and he saved me and uh, we were in revival that week and that was a Friday and that night I came up and made a personal commitment and I was baptized in the church. And uh, you now, I was young and uh, I can see after that that the Lord made a change in my life 'cause I always had a bad temper when I was young - I used to get in fights on the football field everyday. And, uh, after that I don't know I was just a little bit mellower and you know wasn't as bad, but I still had problems even coming up through high school and it wasn't until I really got into the fullness of Christ - you know just turning everything over to him that

the Lord started working and, and bringing out these things that I needed to change and even today, that's an area that I have to just continually surrender parts of my life to Him, and ask Him just to take control of me, you know, cause I can't handle it. And so, you know, it's just a daily walk and like the Bible says, to work out our own salvation , you know, and that's what I believe the Lord's doing with me today - continuing to work it out.

APPENDIX C

BIBLE STUDY TRANSCRIPT SAMPLE

R: Last year where do you think we've grown to, or do you. (3.0 sec pause) Went down to. Regressed. Do you feel like we've changed?

C: Degraded.

J: in the last year?

Jn: No, I feel like we're really just kind of satten still.

M: I think we're, we're still, I think we ---

Jn: I think we
satten still for about a year and half now .

R: I think we've went down.

T: In what area?

M: Where?

R: We no longer have Training Union, dear.

M: yeah. We don't have any Wednesday night

R: there's no missions study -

Jn: we're, we're not reaching out anymore

R: there's no reaching out

M: No we don't reach out.

R: There's no, I mean if you want to talk about organized, organization and organized this and organized that, there's no organized time of visiting.

M: We don't have Bruce there telling us we ought to win souls.

R: Basically the church membership has thrown all of the outreach onto the Deacon
Family Ministry

M: Yeah.

Jn: Well, I think we messed up with our reaching out plan, and I love Bruce dearly,
but I believe when we hired Bruce everybody else says, "Well our job's finished
and ---(M: uh hmmm) we've hired somebody to do it."

R: No, no no no we never was doing it before we even got Bruce.

Jn: Yeah, but that gave them an excuse once we hired Bruce, they said "Okay well it's
not our job anymore, that's his job. That's what we're paying him for."

M: Bruce was bringing in the dysfunctional (laughter).

Jn: Yeah and they went right back out

M: Did, they went right back out the door. They
came in one door and

T: because there was no two.

M: Right, right. And be-and number four was doesn't well enough to those young
disciples.

APPENDIX D

DINNER CONVERSATION TRANSCRIPTS SAMPLE

J: Jeremiah got sick in the van.(T: Uhh) We stopped to get gas and Candy need-

W: You mean got sick, sick?

M: Uh hmm.

Jn: Oooh

J: We stopped to get gas another place and Candy jumped out and got bit by a dog.

(D: Oooh)

R: Are you serious? (J: Yeah)

JN: like sick, staying sick?

T: Was this trip ordained?

J: No. (laughter)

Jn: seems like you have every plague.

C: Maybe you can come and then we'll see how funny it is

J: All the time I'm thinking: "All things work together for good." (laughter)

Jn: So you changed your mind about going to Arkansas?

J: We're still looking for a church around her, you know (laughter and overlapping talk)

Jn: Good!

C: And then after we got home I went to run my errands and came back to the house and realized Lana had my key. I couldn't get back in my house. (Jn: Oooh no) It was like noon and I had to wait til three thirty for the kids to get off of school.

Jn: What did you do?

C: Drove around in circles going, "What am I going to do, what am I going to do?"

(laughter).

Jn: When was this?

J: Yesterday

C: Yeah, Friday.

T: Did ya'll just get back?

Jn: Why didn't you come to the church?

C; Well I stopped at the post office and I went back to the house and

T: When did you
get back?

VITA

Wayne Porter Gregory, born January 29, 1958 in Pineville, Louisiana, is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Wayne Gregory. Upon completion of his secondary education, Wayne graduated from Baylor University in Waco, Texas in a B.A. in History. Subsequent to this, he served as a minister in several Southern Baptist churches, which ultimately formed the basis for this research. In 1986, Wayne entered Louisiana State University and completed a Master's degree in Linguistics in May of 1988. Wayne has had extensive experience in teaching and administering TESOL programs, specifically in the preparation program for international graduate assistants at Louisiana State University. In addition, he has served as an adjunct faculty member with Southeastern Louisiana University, where it has been his responsibility to develop and teach two graduate level courses in ESL teacher training.

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DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

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Major Field: Linguistics

Title of Dissertation: Making the Secular Sacred: An Analysis
of Linguistic Devices used to give Religious Perspective
to Ordinary Events

Approved:

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